

CHOICE CHRISTMAS DIALOGUES & PLAYS

By Marie Irish



Paine Publishing Co.
Dayton, Ohio

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Song Specialties for Your Entertainments

Teachers are discovering that no matter how much novelty there is in their entertainment; how well it is arranged, how thoroughly drilled, if they want to hold the active interest of the audience they must use the best of songs. The songs must be real novelties. The words must be interesting as well as decidedly clever. The music must be catchy and abounding in rich melody. With these things in mind we have prepared this list of superior song novelties for our patrons. All are in regular sheet music form.

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WELCOME SONGS

We've Just Arrived from Bashful Town.
We Hope You've Brought Your Smiles
Along.

Come and Partake of Our Welcome Cake.
We're Very Glad to See You Here.
With Quaking Hearts We Welcome You.

CLOSING SONGS

Mr. Sun and Mrs. Moon.
Now, Aren't You Glad You Came?
We Do Not Like to Say Goodbye.
We'll Now Have to Say Goodbye.

Paine Publishing Co., Dayton, Ohio

Choice Christmas Dialogues and Plays

BY

MARIE IRISH

AUTHOR OF

Choice Christmas Entertainments
Best Christmas Pantomimes
Snappy Humorous Dialogues
Catchy Primary Recitations



PAINE PUBLISHING COMPANY
DAYTON, OHIO

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Choice Christmas Dialogues and Plays

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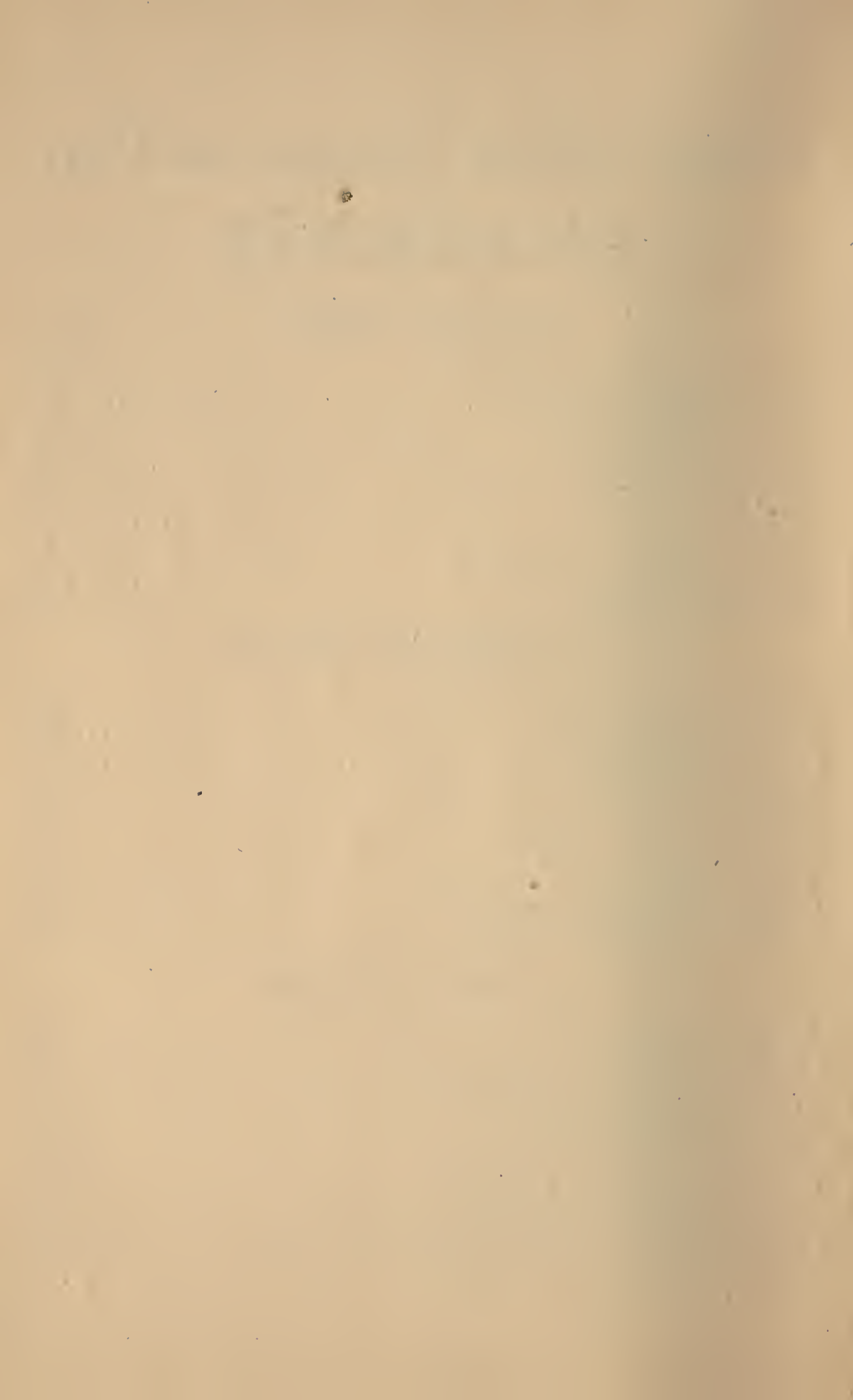
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Choice Christmas Dialogues and Plays

Primary Grades

THE SECRET OF CHRISTMAS

FOR FOUR GIRLS AND THREE BOYS

ROBERT [*crossly*] :

Oh, dear, I'm tired of Christmases!
Just as tired as I can be;
I'm sick and tired of Santa Claus,
And the presents he brings me.
I've got a sled, a drum and skates,
Lots more books than I can read—
In fact, there isn't anything
I can think of that I need.
I've seen so many Christmas trees,
They don't give me any joy;
I wish it wasn't Christmas time,
I'm a most unhappy boy.

Enter little girl in white, trimmed with sprays of holly.

HOLLY GIRL:

I am sure the glossy holly,
With its berries red and bright,
Will cheer you up and make you feel
That Christmas time is *all right*;
Just look at this [*holds out holly*] and happy be—
Isn't it a pretty sight?

ROBERT:

A bushel of holly on the wall
Wouldn't cheer me up at all.

[*Girl goes out sadly.*]

Enter girl in white with red paper bells pinned on her dress. She carries a cluster of small bells.

BELL GIRL:

Just listen to the Christmas bells; [*Rings bells.*]
Does not their merry jingle
Cause you to feel real Christmas-y
And set you all a-tingle?
It makes me happy as anything
When Christmas bells begin to ring.
[*Rings bells again.*]

ROBERT [*scornfully*]:

They could ring from now till doomsday
And not make *me* feel one bit gay.
[*Girl goes out.*]

Enter boy with candles

He carries a strip of pasteboard with several lighted candles set in it. He should have small candles of various colors fastened around his collar for a fringe, sewing them fast by the wicks.

CANDLE BOY:

The candles shining here and there
With glowing, bright little flame,
Should cheer you up and make you feel
That Christmas is more than a name.
As you watch them flicker and glow
Doesn't your love for Christmas grow?

ROBERT:

I'm tired of candles as I can be—
Go away and don't bother me.
[*Boy goes out.*]

Enter two girls

One is trimmed with red crepe paper, the other with green. They sing gaily:

Tune: AULD LANG SYNE

God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Christ, the Lord, was born upon
The blessed Christmas day.
And so we sing today, our carols gay,
For Christ, the Lord, was born upon
The Christmas day.

FIRST GIRL:

Surely Christmas must seem more dear
When the merry carols you hear.

SECOND GIRL:

Do they not make you feel that you
Must have a part in Christmas too?

ROBERT:

I don't enjoy a Christmas song,
So you two may travel along.

[*They exeunt.*]

Enter boy carrying stocking filled with packages

STOCKING BOY:

In early dawn of Christmas morn
Doesn't it fill you with glee,
Cram-full like this from top to toe [*Holds stocking
forward.*]

Your Christmas stocking to see?
The sight of this should make you say
That Christmas is a merry day.

ROBERT:

It doesn't thrill me for a minute
When I don't care for what is in it. [*Boy goes out.*]
Oh, dear! How sad to be a boy
Who hasn't any Christmas joy.

Enter HOLLY-GIRL, BELL-GIRL, CANDLE-BOY, CAROL-GIRLS and STOCKING-BOY, each with what they carried before. They group on each side of ROBERT.

ALL:

Since we can't give YOU Christmas joy
We're going to find another boy;
We'll visit Henry Brown who's lame
And he'll be *very glad* we came.

STOCKING-BOY:

He hasn't got a single toy
To fill his lonely hours with joy.

HOLLY-GIRL:

His home is very poor and bare,
With not a spray of holly there.

BELL-GIRL:

He'll have no good Christmas dinner to eat,
Not even a sack of candy sweet.

CANDLE-BOY:

He's feeling pretty blue because
He's not expecting Santa Claus.

CAROL-GIRLS:

So goodbye; we're going from here
To take Henry Brown some Christmas cheer.

ROBERT [*excitedly*]:

Say, let me go along and help—
He'd like some of my toys, I know;
I'll take him some of my picture books,
And a train of cars that can go.
Let's fix him up a little tree,
And hang holly on the wall;
Come on—it will be splendid fun.
I *do* like Christmas, after all.

ALL:

This is the secret of Christmas, you see:
Share your joys and you'll happy be.

[ROBERT *leads and all pass out merrily.*]

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS

FOR FOUR OF THE SMALLEST FOLKS

Each child wears a crepe paper sash, two green and two red, with tiny bells sewed on the ends; also each one carries a bell or a cluster of small ones, to ring while marching.

Ringling their bells they run in, single file, run once around the stage and form in line across the center.

FIRST CHILD:

When Merry Christmas time draws near
The bells begin to ring;
Don't you enjoy the music of
Their cheerful ting-a-ling?

The one who led in entering leads the file, they run around the stage in a circle and back to places, ringing their bells.

SECOND CHILD:

When Merry Christmas time draws near,
O'er valley, plain and hill,
The bells ring out the old-time song
Of peace and glad good will.

Two go to the right, two to the left, they run around stage to center of back and come up the center to places, ringing bells.

THIRD CHILD:

When Merry Christmas time draws near
The bells ring out and say:
"Let every one be joyous on
The blessed Christmas day."

Two stand still, the other two run around them in a circle, all ringing bells.

FOURTH CHILD:

When Merry Christmas time draws near
The bells say: "While you're glad
Do not forget to share your joy
With someone who is sad."

ALL [*ringing bells softly*]:

Ring, ring, ring and ting-a-ling-ling,
At Merry Christmas time;
We can't help being happy when
The bells begin to chime.

[*Run off in circle, ringing bells.*]

A CHRISTMAS FAMILY

FOR 'A BOY AND A GIRL

GIRL dresses as a mother with long skirt and hair done up on head; boy wears stiff hat, standing collar and tie, a mustache and "grown-up" clothes. On chairs about the stage are six dolls, of various sizes and kinds, some quite battered.

MOTHER [*looking about at dolls*]:

Now children, you are clean and neat;
I could kiss you all, you look so sweet.
I hope you'll be polite all day,
And nothing naughty do or say. [*Knock is heard.*]
A caller's coming. Now please see
How well behaved you each can be.

[*She goes over to side.*]

Enter the AGENT

AGENT:

Madam, I've called today to show
Something you'll want to buy, I know; [*Takes bottle from his pocket.*]

'Tis a medicine that's handy
When one has eaten too much candy.
Since Christmas time is drawing near [*Looks at the dolls.*]

I'm sure that you will need it here.
Though children eat candy Christmas day
One dose of this will drive pain away.
You've a fine family, I must say—
The best I've seen in many a day.

MOTHER:

Oh, thank you sir, for the compliment,
And though to brag is not my intent,
I'm not afraid, sir, to declare,
My children are good as they are fair.
One reason is, I'm safe to say,
Because I got them on Christmas day.

AGENT [*pointing to old doll*]:

This one looks so tattered and old—
I 'spose your love for her's grown cold.

MOTHER:

You're wrong, sir. Though her charms are small
I love SUSANNA best of all.
She looked *so sweet* on the Christmas tree
When dear old Santa brought her to me.

AGENT:

You've a large family. Though they're fair
I'm sure they must be a dreadful care.
Since you've so many I 'spose you'll grieve
If Santa another child should leave.

MOTHER:

Indeed you're mistaken, I'd happy be
If Santa this Christmas brings me three.
Though we mothers have children galore
Santa knows we are pleased with more.

AGENT:

Madam, won't you my medicine try?
Fifty cents this bottle will buy.
Christmas candies you need not fear
When you have this medicine here.

MOTHER:

Well, since it keeps the pain away
I suppose I'll need it Christmas day.
I'll take two bottles, sir, because
I'm expecting more children from Santa Claus.

AGENT:

Madam, you're very wise, I'll say. [*Takes money.*]
Thank you kindly, and now good day. [*Exit.*]

CURTAIN

A MAGIC WORD

FOR NINE GIRLS

Each girl dresses in white and wears a large letter covered with red crepe paper, which reaches from chest to near bottom of dress; also a bow of the red paper on hair.

FIRST GIRL:

See my C! It stands for Curious Children who are wondering what presents gay Santa will bring them on a certain day; it also stands for Candy sweet, which they very much enjoy to eat.

SECOND GIRL [*enters and stands by first*]:

Here's my H! It stands for Holly hanging high upon the wall, and for the Happiness that now is coming to us all. It also stands for Horns which the small boys like to blow, I hope Santa has a plenty in the garden where they grow.

THIRD GIRL [*enters and stands by second*]:

Read my R! It stands for Red, a color much in style this merry season, and though I shall not tell it, there is, my friends, a reason. It also stands for Rest, which many of us need, but we can not get it now—we're very busy indeed.

FOURTH GIRL:

Eye my I! It stands for Industrious—a long word for me to say, but we're all Industrious just 'fore a certain day. It keeps us working hard just trying to be good, as jolly Mr. Santa Claus says all children should.

FIFTH GIRL:

Guess my S! It stands for Sunny Smiles that most folks now are wearing; though we may have troubles, none of us are caring. It also stands for Skates and Sleds that Santa Claus will leave when we're tucked in our beds.

SIXTH GIRL:

This is T! It stands for a certain wonderful Tree that is much in use just now and beautiful to see. It bears curious fruit of more kinds than I can tell; 'tis a tree you oft have seen and its name you all know well.

SEVENTH GIRL:

Mark my M! It stands for Many and also for Merry which Many children are at this time; you can see their smiles a-flashing and hear their gay laugh chime. It also, I would say, stands for a small word—Meek, which is the kind of children that Santa Claus doth seek.

EIGHTH GIRL:

Hooray for my A! It stands, as all of you know, for Any, and if of presents Santa Claus does not bring you Any, let us know—I'll buy you one 'cause I've got an extra penny.

NINTH GIRL:

Yes, this is S! It stands for the slender Stockings that hang upon many a wall; it also stands for Santa who comes with presents to fill them all. Let's hope his sled has a generous supply so he need not pass any Stockings by.

ALL:

Christmas, Christmas, the word our letters spell;
Christmas, Christmas, its praises we now tell,
Christmas, Christmas, the reason we spell it here
Is 'cause we love it best of all days of the year.

FIRST GIRL:

Curious Children are eagerly waiting,

ALL:

For Christmas day;

SECOND GIRL:

Holly is hanging upon the wall,

ALL:

To make Christmas gay.

THIRD GIRL:

Red festoons and Red bells a-plenty,

ALL:

Brighten Christmas day;

FOURTH GIRL:

Industrious children are making gifts

ALL:

So they say, they say.

FIFTH GIRL:

Smiling faces are trying hard,

ALL:

To drive care away;

SIXTH GIRL:

A certain Tree is always seen,

ALL:

On Christmas day.

SEVENTH GIRL:

Children meek from mischief keep,

ALL:

'Tis Santa's laws;

EIGHTH GIRL:

Any one should not be slighted,

ALL:

By Santa Claus.

NINTH GIRL:

Hang up your stocking and get a gift

ALL:

From Santa's sleigh;

FIRST GIRL:

Christmas is a jolly time,

ALL:

So we all say!

All repeat again the four lines above beginning, "Christmas, Christmas," then exeunt.

IS THERE A SANTA CLAUS?

Enter two little children in night-dresses. Hand in hand, they go to the front of the stage.

BOTH:

Mamma and papa think we are in bed,
But we just took it into our head
That we would see old Santa Claus
When he comes here to-night, because
We want to find out if he looks
Just like he does in picture-books.
Jim Jones says he does not believe
That Santa Claus does presents give;
But we know why he doesn't know—
It's 'cause he's bad; mamma told us so.
Santa brings things when you're good,
When you've been just as good as you could.
This is the honest truth, we know,
Because our mamma told us so.

They go to one side of the stage where a large armchair is sitting.

BOTH:

Let's turn this great big chair around,
And then not make a single sound.
We don't want Santa Claus to know
That we are watching for him so.

They turn the chair with the high back facing the center of the stage. They crouch behind it, peering around it toward the fireplace which is at the center. Then, enter MOTHER and FATHER carrying toys. They are older girl and boy dressed in grown-up clothes. They fill the stockings hanging by the fireplace.

FATHER and MOTHER [*as they finish*]:

In the morning our children dear
Will be glad because Santa has been here.

Exit the parents. In the meantime, the children have been watching, first open-eyed, then sobbing. They continue crying aloud for a time after parents have gone.

FIRST CHILD [*while other cries*]:

No Santa Claus, no Santa Claus!

Whatever shall we do?

It seems to me I can't believe

That he's not real and true.

SECOND CHILD [*while FIRST cries aloud*]:

Dear me! dear me!

I cannot see

How there no Santa Claus

Can be!

They cry aloud together. Then a group of children, out of sight, sing "Up on the House," the old, old song.

- 1 "Up on the house-top reindeer pause,
Out jumps good old Santa Claus.
Down through the chimney with lots of toys,
All for the little ones' Christmas joys.

Chorus:

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Who wouldn't go!

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Who wouldn't go!

Up on the house-top click! click! click!

Down through the chimney with good St. Nick.

- 2 "First comes the stocking of little Nell,
Oh, dear Santa, fill it well.
Give her a dolly that laughs and cries,
One that will open and shut its eyes.

Chorus:

"Ho! Ho! Ho! etc.

- 3 "Next comes the stockings of little Will,
Oh, just see what a glorious fill!
Here is a hammer and lots of tacks,
Also a ball and a whip that cracks.

Chorus:

"Ho! Ho! Ho! etc."

At the close of the song, enter a boy dressed in fur and sleigh-bells as messenger from Santa Claus.

Good evening, little children dear,
I'm representing Santa here.
He heard you crying bitter tears,
And sent me down to calm your fears.
For he's a very busy man.
No matter how much he may plan,
He can't get 'round on Christmas Eve,
His presents at all homes to leave.
To your dear papa his gifts he sends,
And he with your mamma to them attends.
But since you were so very sad,
He sent you some "specials" to make you glad—
A little gift for each of you,
And one for all your playmates, too.

Calls names and distributes candy, oranges, or little trinkets.

SECRETS

FOR FOUR BOYS

JACK comes on stage with a package; JOE enters at opposite side.

JOE: Hello, JACK. Where you been?

JACK: I've been down to the toy store.

JOE: What's in that package?

JACK: It's a secret.

JOE: A secret? Say, tell me what it is.

JACK: Promise you won't tell?

JOE: Sure I won't. Cross my heart. [*Crosses heart.*]

JACK: Well, it's a big colored top for little TIM O'BRIEN. He's lame an' has to sit all the time in a chair, so I'm going to give him a Christmas present. He'll like to spin this top. Good-bye. [*Goes off happily.*]

JOE: Say, that's a good secret. [*Pulls a dime from his pocket.*] I've got a dime here that I was going to spend for candy. I'll buy a toy with it for lame TIM's Christmas. Guess I can have a secret as well as JACK. [*Looks at dime and smiles.*]

Enter WILL

WILL: Hello, JOE. What you looking at?

JOE: It's going to be a Christmas secret.

WILL: A secret? Come on and tell me 'bout it.

JOE: Aw, you'll go an' tell.

WILL: No, honest I won't.

JOE: Well, this dime is to buy a toy for lame TIM O'BRIEN's Christmas present. He needs something to play with. I'm going to the store now. Good-bye. [*He goes off whistling.*]

WILL: Huh, he thinks he's smart with his secret. It's a good kind. I'd like one like that myself. [*Thinks.*] I'm going to take some of the money UNCLE FRED gave me and get TIM a present too. Guess he gets tired of being lame. [*Goes off smiling.*]

SCENE II—TIM's home, Christmas morning

TIM sits in an old easy chair with a blanket over his knees.

TIM: I wish Santy Claus had brought me some toys to play with. [*Sighs.*] Guess he didn't have enough to go 'round. [*Knock is heard.*] Come in.

Enter JACK

JACK: Merry Christmas, TIM. Santa Claus sent you this. [*Gives package.*]

TIM: Merry Christmas yourself. Sure, I'm much obliged. [*Hugs package.*]

JACK: I hope you'll like it. [*Knock is heard. TIM calls "Come in."*]

Enter JOE

JOE: Merry Christmas, TIM. Here's something from Santa Claus. [*Gives package.*]

TIM: Merry Christmas to you, an' I'm sure my Christmas will be fine if I gits so many presents. [*Laughs and hugs both packages to him.*]

JACK: Santa Claus wanted you to have something to play with.

TIM: Sure, that's what I've been wantin'. [*Knock is heard.*] Come in.

Enter WILL

WILL: W'y, hello, boys. Merry Christmas, TIM. This is from Santa Claus an' he hopes you'll like to play with it. [*Gives package.*]

TIM [*laughing happily*]: Boys, this is grand. Say, this is the best Christmas I've ever had. Mither said I couldn't have much Christmas, times bein' so hard—but Santy fooled 'er. Oh, this is fine!

WILL: Hurrah for Christmas. It's a jolly day

JOE: Hurrah for Santa Claus 'cause he didn't forget TIM.

TIM: Hurrah for you boys that brought me these.

WILL, JACK and JOE [*together*]:

It is the blessed Christmas time; let ev'ry one
rejoice;

Give in the name of the Christ Child and praise
Him with glad voice.

"Good will upon the earth" was the angels first
Christmas song,

And so today the children send this good will speed-
ing along.

TIM: That's a pretty verse, boys.

WILL: We learned it at school. [*The three boys come down to side of stage and stand in a group.*]

JACK: Aren't Christmas secrets splendid?

JOE: I'll say they are! [*They stand smiling at TIM who hugs his packages happily.*]

CURTAIN

SURPRISING THE SURPRISERS

FOR ONE BOY AND THREE GIRLS

ONE girl dresses as a mother, wearing hair done up on head and a long skirt. The part of UNCLE HENRY is taken by an upper grade boy who wears grown-up clothes and a mustache.

Discovered, MRS. GRAY sewing—Enter BESS and SUE

BESS [*carrying a small box*]: Oh, mother, our plan is working just fine.

SUE: We didn't get as much money as we wanted, but we have enough to buy a dolly.

BESS: And if it isn't a large one I'm sure Jennie will love it. Don't you think she will?

MRS. GRAY: I am sure she will. It is a nice plan and I am glad you girls thought of it.

SUE: We are going to buy the dolly tomorrow and have Jennie's mother put it in her stocking.

BESS: Think how glad poor Jennie will be to find it Christmas morning. [*The two girls sing*]:

Tune: YANKEE DOODLE [*Omit chorus.*]

The Christmas day is drawing near,
And oh, won't it be jolly
To wake up early in the morn
And find a pretty dolly?

To be without a doll, you know,
Is re'lly very shocking;
So won't Miss Jennie be surprised
To find one in her stocking?

[*Girls laugh.*]

SUE: And now may we go over to Dora's, mother? We want her to go with us tomorrow to buy the dolly.

MRS. GRAY: Yes, but do not stay too long. [*Girls leave box on the table and exeunt.*]

Enter UNCLE HENRY

UNCLE HENRY: Well, Mary, what are you doing?

MRS. GRAY: I am making an apron for Grandma Willis for Christmas. This is a busy time, but I enjoy it.

UNCLE HENRY: Oh, I don't believe in all this Christmas work. I don't think it pays. Foolishness, I say. [*Picks up the box girls left.*] What's this?

MRS. GRAY: It is some money BESS and SUE brought home. A number of the school children gave it to buy little Jennie Dennis a doll for Christmas. Her mother isn't able to get her one and Jennie is sick.

UNCLE HENRY: Well, I don't believe in giving presents.

MRS. GRAY [*looking off*]: There goes Mrs. Lewis. I must ask her how her mother is. [*Exit.*]

UNCLE HENRY [*opens box*]: I wonder how much money those children have. [*Counts.*] Ten, twenty, twenty-five, thirty-five, forty, fifty, sixty cents. Humph! Sixty cents won't buy very much of a doll. [*Thinks.*] I—I—don't believe in Christmas myself—but, well, I'd sort of like to see that little sick girl get a doll. [*Walks across floor thinking.*] I wish she could have a real nice one, I'll declare I do. [*Stops suddenly.*] I know what I'll do. I'm not used to such things, but I'm going to. [*Empties money from box into his pocket, leaves box on table and goes off.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II

Enter BESS and SUE

SUE: Here is the box. Now we must hurry or the girls will be waiting. [*Picks up box.*] This box seems light. [*Opens it.*] W'y, our money is gone.

BESS [*looking*]: Oh, who can have taken it? Oh, dear. [*Rubs eyes.*]

SUE: Now we can't buy Jennie's dolly. [*They sit and begin to cry.*]

Enter MRS. GRAY

MRS. GRAY: Why, girls, what is the matter? What has happened?

BESS: S-s-some—one—has t-t-taken our money. [*Cries.*]

SUE: So—we c-c-an't buy—J-Jennie's doll. [*Cries.*]

Enter UNCLE HENRY with large package

UNCLE HENRY: Well, well, what are you girls crying about?

MRS. GRAY: Someone took the money they had collected to buy a doll for little Jennie

UNCLE HENRY: Oh! Well. [*Unwraps package and shows a large doll. One can be borrowed for the occasion.*] I don't believe much in Christmas presents—but—I sort of wanted that sick girl to have a real nice doll. Do you 'spose she'll like this?

SUE: Oh, how lovely!

BESS: Is it really for Jennie?

UNCLE HENRY: Yes, I got it with your sixty cents—and a little more.

SUE: Oh, you dear UNCLE HENRY!

BESS: You're a reg'lar Santa Claus. [*SUE sits and holds doll; BESS kneels in front of her and fondles it; UNCLE HENRY and MRS. GRAY stand back of them smiling.*]

CURTAIN

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

FIFTEEN OR MORE CHILDREN

DECEMBER wears dark suit well trimmed with evergreen and has green cap; MESSENGER BOYS, dark suits trimmed with white crepe paper, and white caps; SNOW FAIRIES, white dresses and stockings, large white bow on hair, and carry a white bag of white paper torn very fine for snow. The COLOR ELVES are well trimmed with bright red crepe paper, have red caps and carry bows with several streamer ends to pin on DECEMBER. The HOLLY GIRLS have dresses of green crepe paper and green caps; carry bunches of holly or evergreen.

At center of back, leaving room behind it for the children to pass have an evergreen-trimmed chair for DECEMBER.

DECEMBER:

Dear me, so much sunshine does not suit me at all;
To judge by these warm days you'd think it still was fall.
I'll proceed to call my messengers together,
And notify old Winter to speed up Christmas weather.

[*Blows blast on trumpet.*]

Enter two little MESSENGER BOYS, hastily

FIRST BOY:

Here we are, DECEMBER, ready for some work;

SECOND BOY:

Just tell us what to do; you'll find we will not shirk.

DECEMBER:

I'm quite disturbed because, tho' Christmas time draws
near,

The weather stays so balmy, the snowflakes can't appear;
You tell Father Winter to make the North Wind blow,
And send word up to Cloudland to furnish us some snow.

FIRST BOY:

Ha, ha! That's a task we shall be glad to do;

SECOND BOY:

Ho! Winter will wake up when he hears from *you*.

[*They run off.*]

DECEMBER:

There! I quite forgot to speak about the greens;

We need *lots* of them to trim the Christmas scenes.

[*Blows blast on his trumpet.*]

Re-enter the two MESSENGER BOYS, running

FIRST BOY:

Are there other orders you desire to send?

SECOND BOY:

Make your wishes known—to them we will attend.

DECEMBER:

Tell the Fairies of the Green, as you hurry by,
Of evergreens and holly we'll need a large supply;
Tell the COLOR ELVES that DECEMBER said
We must surely have a big amount of red.

FIRST BOY:

All right, good DECEMBER, that will soon be done;

SECOND BOY:

Ho, that isn't work—it's only play and fun.

[*They run out merrily.*]

DECEMBER:

Now I think that I can rest in calm content;
Hope we get results from the orders I've just sent.

[*Sits in chair at back of stage.*]

Enter four or more little SNOW FAIRIES

THEY run once around the stage in a circle, then from the center of back run down the center of stage to front where half go to right, others to left, run down sides, form couples at center of back, run up to front and form in line, side by side. While thus running they occasionally toss up small handfuls of the snowflakes. When in line they sing:

Tune: JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW

- 1 Up in Cloudland, in the sky,
There the tiny Snowflakes lie,
When we hear the Christmas call,
Down to earth we lightly fall.

Chorus:

DURING the singing of chorus they throw up snowflakes which fall on their heads and the floor.

Light little Snowflakes,
Bright little Snowflakes,
White little Snowflakes,
So softly, softly fall.

- 2 Christmas is a merry time,
We are glad to do our part,
And we hope you all will have
Joy of Christmas in your heart.

Chorus as before.

THEY run to right corner of front, down side and circle around DECEMBER, throwing snowflakes on him as they pass around, then stand at back of stage, at DECEMBER'S left.

Enter several FAIRIES OF THE GREEN

THEY pass to center of back [*just in front of DECEMBER*], then up center to front where half pass to right, others to left, down sides, form couples at center of back, raising holly and holding it crossed, up to front, half to each side, down sides, form in line abreast and come up to front with holly held high.

ONE CHILD SPEAKS:

What would you do without Christmas greens
To decorate the Yule-tide scenes?
The holly, the pine and mistletoe,
Now aren't you glad we make them grow?

ALL:

Christmas would seem quite barren, we ween,
Were it not for the FAIRIES OF THE GREEN.

ANOTHER CHILD SPEAKS:

So hang the greens high and hang them low,
We've made loads and loads of them grow;
With wreaths of holly and festoons gay
Brighten your homes for Christmas day.

ALL:

And as you enjoy each Christmas scene,
Remember the FAIRIES OF THE GREEN.

THEY pass to left corner, down side, and circle around DECEMBER,
each pinning her holly on him as she passes.

Enter the four COLOR ELVES

THEY run from left corner of back diagonally to right corner front,
across front of stage, diagonally from left corner of front to right
corner of back, to center of back, up center to front and form in
line, side by side.

ONE BOY SPEAKS:

Don't you think red's a beautiful sight?
So warm and rosy, cheerful and bright;
The holly berries and streamers gay
Add much to the scenes of Christmas day.

ALL:

So use lots of red, whatever you do;
The COLOR ELVES have made it for you.

A SECOND BOY SPEAKS:

Tie your green wreaths with bright bows of red,
And hang some red bells high overhead;
This dull old world needs a lot of cheer
'Cause Christmas day is drawing near.

ALL:

Don't stint on red, for we tell you true,
We've made just *oceans* of it for you.

THEY run merrily around in a circle at the right side of stage, pass over and run once around in a circle at the left side, then down left side and passing around DECEMBER two pin their streamers to his cap, the others pin one on each shoulder. They stand just back of him and Snowflakes, Greens and Reds all sing:

Tune: "WORK FOR THE NIGHT IS COMING"

We have been busy working,
Working by day and night,
Getting this old world ready
For a Christmas bright;
Soft little Flakes from Cloudland,
Fairies of Christmas Greens,
Elves of the brilliant scarlet,
Cheering Christmas scenes.

ALL SPEAK:

We'll say, DECEMBER, we've done our best,
Now Santa Claus must do the rest;
To old and young we now would say:
We wish you a Merry Christmas Day.

DECEMBER comes to center of stage, the others form two circles and dance twice around him, one circle going each direction; then all run from stage followed by DECEMBER.

BOASTFUL DECEMBER

FOR TWELVE CHILDREN

EACH child dresses to represent a month, DECEMBER having dark suit trimmed with evergreen and holly; JANUARY and FEBRUARY having dark suits trimmed with white cotton batton; MARCH wearing hood and raincoat; APRIL and MAY, light suits trimmed with light green; JUNE, white suit much trimmed with flowers; JULY and AUGUST, thin suits, carry fans: SEPTEMBER, dark suit trimmed with yellow; OCTOBER, decorated with paper leaves of bright colors; NOVEMBER, dark suit, red sash, white cap, collar and cuffs.

DECEMBER [*entering proudly*] :

Ha, what an important month am I!

DECEMBER, the last of the year;

I bring the long-famed Christmas day,

When jolly Saint Nick doth appear.

I'm the month that furnishes folks

Their Christmas joys and good cheer.

JANUARY [*entering quickly*] :

Oh, DECEMBER, you make me tired!

I can tell you that *every one*

Of us months has our special work

In preparing the Christmas fun;

Without *our* assistance, I assure you,

Your Christmas success would be undone.

THE OTHER TEN MONTHS [*running on quickly and standing grouped, half at right and half at left side of DECEMBER*] :

That's right, you boasting DECEMBER!

We want you to know right away

That *we've* a share in giving to folks

The pleasures of Christmas day.

DECEMBER [*scornfully*] :

Humph! That statement is a surprise.

You'd better prove it if you're so wise.

FEBRUARY [*stepping forward and bowing to DECEMBER*] :

FEBRUARY's work is important;

I furnish storms and wintry breeze

To develop the hardy evergreens

That you use for Christmas trees;

And Yule-tide would be as dull as you please

If folks couldn't have their Christmas trees.

[*Steps back to place.*]

MARCH [*each month steps forward, etc.*]:

MARCH starts the spring rains and freshets
To furnish the water supply
To keep the gardens growing
As the days of summer flit by;
You know it would seem most extremely queer
Not to have vegetables when Christmas is here.

APRIL:

APRIL brings the days of sheep shearing,
When wool is clipped and sent away
To make sweaters, caps and mittens
For Santa to give you Christmas day;
And to make the stockings Bess and Bill
Hang on the wall for Santa to fill.

MAY:

MAY sunshine makes the fields of wheat grow
To provide the flour to make
The Christmas puddings, pies and rolls,
Sweet cookies and loaves of spicy cake;
Christmas, of course, wouldn't seem complete
Without a supply of *these* to eat.

JUNE:

JUNE is the month when Santa begins
To make thousands of dollies fair,
For eagerly-waiting little girls,
Here, and there, and everywhere.
Christmas wouldn't be Christmas at all
Without the dollies, large and small.

JULY:

Hot JULY makes the sugar cane grow;
Santa must have sugar handy
To make the tons of sugar plums,
Bonbons, and other Christmas candy;
Believe me, Christmas would lose its joys
Without the candy for girls and boys.

AUGUST:

The sunshine of AUGUST's sultry hours
Makes the oranges and apples grow,
And Santa scarce could get along
Without their red and golden glow;
They're fine to eat, and a pretty sight
In helping to make your Christmas bright.

SEPTEMBER:

The golden days of bright SEPTEMBER
Ripen the squashes you so prize,
The potatoes, and yellow pumpkins
For making delicious Christmas pies;
SEPTEMBER'S busy from west to east,
Helping prepare the big Christmas feast.

OCTOBER:

Then OCTOBER brings the frosty days
When the Christmas nuts begin to fall,
And I assure you it's lots of work
To supply enough for you all;
Old and young seem to think it's dandy
To have Christmas nuts to go with the candy.

NOVEMBER:

You must understand, DECEMBER,
My work is not among the least,
For I finish fattening chickens
And turkeys for the Christmas feast;
I am certain people would loudly sigh
If NOVEMBER failed you with this supply.

JANUARY:

JANUARY furnishes ice and snow,
Which is *very* important, because
Boys and girls must use the skates and sleds
That are brought them by Santa Claus;
I should think that most anyone could see
How much Christmas pleasure depends upon me.

FEBRUARY:

So you see, you proud DECEMBER,
That all the rest of the year
We months are busy preparing
For your season of Christmas cheer;
Perhaps by this time you're able to see
If we didn't help you where you would be.

ALL:

So after this, DECEMBER,
Be more humble and remember
The success of Christmas depends on— [*each month
calls out its name*] JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH,
APRIL, MAY, JUNE, JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER,
OCTOBER, NOVEMBER. [*All.*]
As well as boastful DECEMBER!

DECEMBER:

Well! What you say is true, I'm sure,
And I owe you much thanks, I confess,
For the work you have been doing
To make Christmas day a success. [*Bows.*]
Thank you!

ALL:

You're welcome, welcome, DECEMBER,
We hope you'll always remember
We're glad to help you in ev'ry way,
'Cause all the world loves Christmas Day.

Choice Christmas Dialogues and Plays

Intermediate Grades

THE LIGHTS OF CHRISTMAS

FOR FIFTEEN OR MORE CHILDREN

PRIMARY children can be used in the candle scene if desired; less children can be used by having some of the STARS also be LIGHT BEARERS.

COSTUMES

THE CANDLE children wear white, trimmed with deep yellow crepe paper and each carries a lighted candle; the STARS wear white, trimmed with light yellow and each carries two stars fastened to the end of slender wires eighteen inches long; the LIGHT BEARERS wear coats or cloaks, trimmed with white cotton and caps, part of red and part green crepe paper. They carry baskets and packages decorated with sprays of holly or evergreen and bright crepe paper.

STAGE ARRANGEMENT

AT back of stage arrange a fireplace and lay in it several sticks of wood. While the Prologue is being given pour denaturized alcohol over the wood and set it on fire. In front of the fireplace hang two curtains so that one can be drawn to each side as Prologue is finished, revealing fireplace with a little girl sitting at one side rocking a dolly.

PROLOGUE

BOY [*enters and stands in front of curtain*]:

Oh, the golden lights of Christmas,
How they cheer the world with their sheen,
And add a roseate brightness
To many a dull Christmas scene;
For the warm-hued lights of Christmas
A wonderful comfort bestow,
And shining into the darkness
Set many a cold heart aglow.

Curtains are drawn apart, revealing fireplace.

Boy [*stepping back to stand beside fireplace*] :

The fires in our homes at Christmas
Make them cozy with warmth and cheer,
Driving out the cold atmosphere
Winter sends as Christmas draws near.
The yule-log, cracking and blazing,
Sends out its luminous blaze,
And adds the snapping of embers
To the carols of Christmas praise.

Enter four or more girls with stars

THEY stand in line in front of fireplace, facing audience.

FIRST GIRL :

Long years ago the stars shone down
Upon the hills of Bethlehem,
Where shepherds heard the Christmas song
The throng of angels sang to them.

Then, too, there came across the sky
With a steady move to the West,
The star that led the famed Wise Men,
Who rode on a wonderful quest.

And now at Christmas-tide the stars
Still shine with a radiant glow,
And twinkle messages of love,
To the busy old world below.

All the STARS sing :

Tune: IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR
Page 80 "Golden Book of Favorite Songs"

Oh, brightly shone the Christmas stars,
With radiant glow of old,
As when to shepherds bowing low,
The birth of Christ they told;
"Peace on the earth, good-will to men,"
From heav'n this message came,
And so today the glowing stars
To us this peace proclaim.

Still from the skies they twinkle down
The wonderful song of old,
And send to earth God's Christmas love
Upon their beams of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good-will to men,"
They flash with silent voice,
And all who love the Christmas time
May listen and rejoice.

THE STARS remain in line; six or more children with lighted candles enter and stand in front of the STARS.

In our homes the Christmas candles
Shine out with a glimmering ray,
And do their small but constant part
To drive Christmas sadness away;
And so, if you, and you, and you [*Point.*]
Shine like candles and will agree
To brighten someone's weary lot,
Oh, how merry Christmas will be!

THE CANDLES kneel, close together, the others stand just back of them, holding their stars above the heads of those kneeling, and all sing:

Tune: JOLLY OLD SAINT NICHOLAS

Christmas CANDLES, small and bright,
Shine as best they can,
For they know they are a part
Of the Christmas plan;
STARS and CANDLES do their best,
Never stop to doubt—
Dreary would our Christmas be
If the lights went out.

THE STARS stand in a group with wires held high; the CANDLES pass around them in a circle, then exeunt, the STARS following:

BOY [*steps forward to recite*] :

The Christmas fires and candles bright,
The STARS that glow with golden light,
Have their own work to do;
But there are other Christmas lights,
Who are much less familiar sights,
That I'll introduce to you.

HE steps back and several boys and girls enter with baskets and packages. They stand in group at center of stage. Curtains at back are drawn together to prepare for last scene.

FIRST GIRL:

Yes, we are also Christmas Lights,
For we scatter cheer with our smiles;
And to frighten Old Gloom away
We perform some especial wiles;
We take some fruit to Grandma Jones,
Or give a doll to sick Nellie;
We give a box of candy here,
And there a tumbler of jelly.
We light up sad homes with our giving—
There are many such to relieve;
We have found it is better to give
Unto others than to receive.

ALL [*sing*] :

Tune: As above.

We are glad when Christmas comes,
For we think it's fine
When we find a gloomy heart,
Just to make it shine;
With a package and a smile
We can carry light,
For a gift and kindly word
Make a Christmas bright.

THEY pass off stage; the curtains are drawn apart revealing a sick child in a large chair. The Christmas Lights re-enter and each give some present to the child, then they stand in semi-circle back of child and sing again the above stanza.

CURTAIN

THE BOASTFUL GIANT

CHARACTERS

MARY

NORA

JOE

ELMER

GIANT SELFISHNESS

SCENE—A room with chairs and a small table

Discovered, ELMER and JOE, seated

JOE: Are you going to spend all the money you've got buying Christmas presents?

ELMER: I don't know. There are so many folks to give to that I won't have much left if I get started buying.
Enter GIANT SELFISHNESS, who stands at side, listening

JOE: For my part, I don't see any use in giving folks presents. What's the good of it? We might as well spend our money on ourselves.

ELMER: Maybe you are right; Christmas wouldn't be much fun, though, if we didn't give any presents.

SELFISHNESS [*coming forward*]: Of course he's right. This idea of giving presents is foolish, very foolish.

ELMER: Who are you, please?

SELFISHNESS [*proudly*]: I am GIANT SELFISHNESS, and I have many subjects; indeed, I have thousands of people under my control. I am one of the greatest Giants in the world.

JOE [*admiringly*]: You must be very powerful.

SELFISHNESS [*strikes pose and struts about*]: Indeed, I *am*. I hope you two boys will become my subjects too, for I'll save you a great deal of money and make you prosperous.

ELMER: How do you do it?

SELFISHNESS: By teaching you to look out for number one; to think of yourselves and not spend on other folks. This Christmas business is one thing I work against. What's the good of giving to this and that one when you could save your money?

JOE: That's what I say.

ELMER: But I think we ought to do *something* to make folks happy at Christmas.

SELFISHNESS [*scoffing*]: Happy? Bosh! Make yourselves happy and let others look out for themselves. You just let me rule you and you'll be better off.

JOE: All right, we will.

ELMER: Do you really have thousands of subjects who obey you?

SELFISHNESS [*proudly*]: I should say I do. [*Looks off.*] Now you just watch and see me get these girls on my side.

Enter MARY and NORA

MARY: Come on, boys, aren't you going down town with us to get the Christmas presents?

SELFISHNESS [*scoffing*]: Buy Christmas presents? How silly! Of course the boys aren't going—they look out for number one.

NORA: Who are you?

SELFISHNESS [*draws himself up and strikes pose*]: I am GIANT SELFISHNESS and I rule so many thousands of subjects you couldn't count them.

MARY [*scornfully*]: Oh, is that so? I've heard of you.

SELFISHNESS: Of course you have. I'm known everywhere. I want to give you girls some splendid advice.

NORA: We don't want it.

JOE: Shame on you to speak so.

SELFISHNESS [*angrily*]: I am very powerful.

MARY: We don't care if you are. Come on boys, we are going down town to buy a present for little sick David Barnes.

JOE: I guess—we won't go.

SELFISHNESS: No, don't go. You can't help it if he is sick. You can't spend money on all these needy folks. Look out for number one.

NORA: And we want to get a book for Jennie Wilson who was hurt last week.

MARY: And a toy for Bennie Maloney.

SELFISHNESS: Ho, ho, how silly! Don't you know it's foolish to bother about Christmas?

NORA: Silly to be kind to people? I guess not.

MARY: Silly to make folks happy? I guess not.

SELFISHNESS: Now you just let me tell you that—

NORA: We don't want to hear what you have to say.

MARY: You can't make us selfish—not at Christmas time.

SELFISHNESS [*strutting across stage*]: You don't realize how very powerful I am.

NORA: You are not as great as you think you are.

MARY: You can't rule us. We are going to have a splendid Christmas making folks happy.

NORA: And that will make us happy, too.

SELFISHNESS: I guess I'll have to go; I have a lot of work to do. [*Moves toward side.*]

MARY: Yes, go. [*Stamps foot and points off stage.*]

NORA: We don't want you here. [*Waves him off.*]

SELFISHNESS [*to JOE*]: I'm sorry for you boys. [*Exit.*]

MARY: Now, let's go. I love to buy presents.

JOE: I'd rather make folks happy than mind old SELFISHNESS.

ELMER: So would I. [*All exeunt.*]

THE BROKEN PICTURE

CHARACTERS

TED CAIN

AUNT SUSAN

MRS. CAIN

GRANDFATHER CAIN

SCENE—The living room, with an easy chair and cushion

Enter TED with package

TED: I've got a secret and I'm not going to let any of the folks know it. I bought a Christmas present for Dorothy who lives next door and if the folks find it out they'll tease me about it. It's a picture with a glass and a real nice frame. I know Dorothy will like it 'cause it's pretty. I'm going to write on it. [*Sits and writes on outside of package.*] Now she'll know who gave it to her. [*Jumps up.*] Oh, somebody's coming! Where can I hide this? I'll put it under the cushion and take it out as soon as they've gone. [*Quickly hides picture under cushion of easy chair.*]

Enter MRS. CAIN

MRS. CAIN: TED, your Uncle Will is out here with the car and says if you want to go over to Clifton with him to come jump in.

TED: Oh, a ride over to Clifton! That will suit me just fine. Good-bye mother. [*He runs out.*]

MRS. CAIN: I'd like to go myself but there is too much to do for Christmas. I'll have to look at my cake this minute. [*Hurries out.*]

Enter GRANDFATHER

GRANDFATHER: Well, I guess I'll sit down an' read the paper a few minutes. Got to kind of keep an eye on what's going on in the world. [*Gets paper and sits down heavily in the easy chair.*] Dear me, seems like I heard something crack. Wonder if there's something under this cushion. [*Gets up, lifts cushion and finds package.*] Land sakes a-livin'! I sure busted somethin'. [*Looks at package and reads aloud.*] From TED to Dorothy, Merry Christmas. Ha, ha! So that young rascal's givin' Dorothy a present; is he? [*Unwraps paper enough to see picture.*] A picture an' I broke the glass plum' across. Well, I'll go right down town now an' get another one an' TED won't know I broke this. [*Puts package back under the cushion and goes out.*]

Enter AUNT SUSAN

AUNT SUSAN: Getting ready for Christmas is lots of work. I'm jest all tired out. [*Sighs.*] I'm goin' to sit down an' rest awhile—shan't even knit on those mittens for TED, though I ought to be gettin' 'em done, I 'spose. [*She drops down into easy chair.*] Well, my sakes, it sounded jest as if something broke when I sat down. What can be under this cushion? [*Gets up and lifts cushion.*] A package—now what can it be? [*Reads writing aloud.*] From TED to Dorothy, Merry Christmas. Well, if that young scamp isn't getting smart—giving presents to girls! [*She opens package enough to see the picture.*] A pretty picture an' I've broke the glass in four pieces. They've got some like this at the Racket store; I'll go right down now an' get another one. [*Puts package back and hurries out.*]

Enter MRS. CAIN

MRS. CAIN: My cake is baked and on the pantry shelf; looks as if it'll be real good. Now I'll sit down an' sew on that apron for Aunt Hester. [*Gets her sewing and drops down into easy chair.*] That's queer! Sounded like something cracked when I sat down. Wonder if somebody put something under this cushion. [*Gets up, lifts cushion and finds package.*] The very idea of putting this here—might have known it would get busted. [*Reads aloud.*] From TED to Dorothy, Merry Christmas. Well if he isn't a sly one, never telling us a word about it. [*Unwraps package enough to see picture.*] Now, isn't this pretty? I've cracked the glass in a dozen pieces. Thank goodness, they've got a lot of these down at the store; I'll go right over now an' get another one. I won't let GRANDFATHER an' SUSAN know 'bout it 'cause they'd tease TED. [*Re-wraps package, puts it under cushion and goes out.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II—Room as before

Enter TED, *hastily*

TED: I went off in such a hurry I forget 'bout my picture for Dorothy an' left it under the cushion. I wonder if it's all right. [*Takes package from under cushion and unwraps it.*] Oh, botheration! Smashed into forty pieces. Well, I 'spose it serves me right for leaving it here. What am I going to do now? Here comes someone. [*Hastily puts package back under cushion.*]

Enter GRANDFATHER *with package*

GRANDFATHER: You can't guess what I've got here. Truth is, I sat down on something you left under that cushion an' broke the glass. I kind of thought Dorothy wouldn't want a busted present, so I went down an' got another one like it. Better hide this in a safe place. We won't say anything 'bout it to the others 'cause they might tease you 'bout it. [*Gives package to TED and goes out.*]

TED: Say, he's a good sport; never teased me a bit. Here comes somebody. [*He lays both packages under a paper on the table.*]

Enter AUNT SUSAN [Carries package.]

AUNT SUSAN: Oh, TED, did you find your package? Wasn't it terrible? I sat down on it an' broke it in a dozen pieces. But never mind, I went down and bought another one just like it. It won't matter a bit. [*Gives him package.*] I think Dorothy'll like it real well. We won't tell the others, then they won't tease you. [*Beams upon him, gives him the package and goes out.*]

TED: Well, she's alright—never laughed at me a bit. What'll I do with two of 'em? [*Slips package under paper with the others.*]

Enter MRS. CAIN with package

MRS. CAIN: TEDDY, what made you leave that picture under the cushion? *Of course* it would get broken; I sat on it and smashed it into forty pieces. I went down to the store an' got another one just like it so it's alright. [*Gives him package.*] I think it's real nice of you to give it to Dorthy.

TED [*Laughs heartily*]: If this isn't the funniest thing. [*Laughs again.*]

Enter GRANDFATHER and AUNT SUSAN

GRANDFATHER [*looking at package*]: Did you tell your ma 'bout the picture I broke?

AUNT SUSAN: That *you* broke? W'y, *I* broke it.

MRS. CAIN [*to AUNT SUSAN*]: You didn't break it; *I* did.

GRANDFATHER: No, *I* broke it an' bought another one.

AUNT SUSAN [*very firmly*]: No, *I* broke it an' bought another one.

MRS. CAIN: Well, I broke it myself an' bought another one.

TED [*laughing*]: Yes, here they are. [*Shows the three packages. Laughs.*] Who's going to have these two extra ones?

GRANDFATHER: Well, I'll declare!

AUNT SUSAN: The very idea!

MRS. CAIN: Aren't we the limit? [*All laugh heartily as curtain falls.*]

NOTE—A small pain of glass can be used for the picture.

HOW EDITH FOUND CHRISTMAS

CHARACTERS

EDITH, lonely little rich girl

SIMS, the butler

LOVE
KINDNESS } Christmas fairies

BEN
CHUB } Happy poor children
LAURA }

TOOTS
BUDDIE } Little orphans

STAGE ARRANGEMENT

IN the first scene a large easy chair, table with books, candy and nuts, several dolls, toys and dish of fruit give the appearance of a well-to-do home.

IN the second scene the room is bare except for some common chairs and a table on which stands a branch of evergreen planted in an old pail.

FAIRIES dress in white, one trimmed with red, the other green crepe paper.

SCENE I—In EDITH's home

Discovered, EDITH standing by the table

EDITH: Oh, dear, I'm so lonesome I don't know what to do. Papa and mama had to go away this morning because auntie is very sick, so I'm left all alone on Christmas day. I have a lot of presents but I can't play with them when I'm so lonesome. This is the worst Christmas I've ever had—I just don't know what to do. I feel so bad—I—can't help—crying. [*She goes to chair, sits and cries, then lays head back and goes to sleep.*]

Enter Christmas fairies

LOVE: Here is a little girl who has been crying because she is lonesome. Isn't that too bad, when every child should be happy on Christmas day? I feel very sorry for her. Can we comfort her in any way?

KINDNESS: Just see all the nice things on the table. I suppose she got them for Christmas. What a pity she can't be happy when she has so many presents. See the pretty dolls.

LOVE: And see what a lot of fruit and nuts and candy. Wouldn't CHUB and LAURA be glad to have some of it for their party? How little TOOTS would like one of these dolls.

KINDNESS: Wouldn't it be fine if this lonely little girl could go to the Christmas party at CHUB's house? I'm sure she would have a nice time.

LOVE: Wouldn't it be splendid if she could go and take some of the nice things that are here? She could spare them as well as not.

KINDNESS: She is so lonely I think we ought to—to—

LOVE: To suggest to her that she find a Merry Christmas?

KINDNESS: Yes, let's do it. [*They stand near the chair in which EDITH sleeps and sing*]:

Tune: JINGLE BELLS

In a cottage small,
On the street beside the mill,
You can happy be, so happy if you will;
A Christmas party gay
They're having there today,
If you're lonely, go over there
Their Christmas joys to share.
Don't delay, haste away,
To that cottage small;
Gladly they will welcome you
If you just obey our call.
Don't delay, haste away,
You'll find pleasure there;
Merry shall your Christmas be
If your bounties you but share.

LOVE: I hope she will go.

KINDNESS: I think she will. Let us hurry off before she wakes. [*They run out.*]

EDITH [*sits up, yawns and rubs eyes*]: Oh, I had the nicest dream! Two dear little fairies came and told me to go to a little house where I can have a merry Christmas. It was so real I wish I could go. Where was it? Oh, yes, down by the mill. I'm sure I can find the place. The fairies said I was to share my good things so I'm sure some poor family lives there who would like some of my toys and candy. [*Thinks.*] I'll get SIMS to help me. [*Goes over and rings bell.*]

Enter SIMS

SIMS: Is there something you want, MISS EDITH?

EDITH: Oh, SIMS, I am so lonesome.

SIMS: Yes, Miss, I think it is a shame, I do, that you have to be here alone on Christmas day. You ought to have somebody come in, now, to play games with you and eat candy.

EDITH: I'm tired of candy and I don't want to play games. I want to go somewhere.

SIMS: Dear me, MISS, now where would you go on Christmas day? Marie might take you to the movies when she comes back.

EDITH: Oh, I'm tired of shows. SIMS, will you do something for me?

SIMS: Yes, MISS, that is, if it's something your folks won't mind about me doing, an' it don't take too much time an' bother.

EDITH: Please go down the back way to the mill and see who lives in the little house beside it and see what they are doing.

SIMS: Well, MISS, that's a funny thing to do; but it won't take me long an' seein' as it's Christmas an' you're havin' a dull time, I'll go.

EDITH: , Please hurry.

SIMS: Yes, MISS. [*Goes out.*]

EDITH: Now, I'm going to get ready for the party. [*She runs off and comes back with a large basket and some red tissue paper. She cuts strips and trims the basket, then fills it with two dolls, some toys, candy, fruit, etc., from the table. She laughs and has a merry time doing so.*]

Enter SIMS

SIMS: Well, Miss EDITH, I found out 'bout 'em. It's a little bit of a place where a poor family lives, an' there's nobody there but some children an' they're gettin' ready for a party an' trimmin' up a tiny little sprig for a Christmas tree, 'bout knee-high to a grasshopper, an' nothing to put on it by the looks of things.

EDITH [*claps her hands*]: Oh, how splendid! That's just where I want to go. SIMS, will you do something more for me?

SIMS: Now, Miss, I don't know. I'm 'fraid I'll be gettin' in bad with your folks when they find out. What is it you want?

EDITH: I've got a basket all packed with presents and some things to eat. I'm going down to that house to a Christmas party and I want you to bring the basket down after a while. Will you?

SIMS: Now, Miss, I don't think your folks want you to—

EDITH: SIMS, you know very well we ought to help make folks happy at Christmas. Oh, SIMS, can't you dress up like Santa and come in with the things for them? Oh, please, please!

SIMS: Well, now, I—I—seein' as it's Christmas an' you're so set on it, maybe I might, but I'm not promisin' sure.

EDITH: Oh, goody, goody! I'm going now. [*She runs out.*]

SIMS: Dear, dear, what am I gettin' into? Well, Christmas is Christmas an' it comes but once a year. [*Stands by the table and eats candy.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II—In the little cottage

Discovered, BEN, CHUB and LAURA

LAURA: Ain't our party goin' to be grand?

CHUB: I'll say it is, with this fine Christmas tree.

BEN: Won't TOOTS an' BUDDIE be s'prised?

LAURA: Oh, I guess they will. They'll think Christmas is splendid. Only I do wish we had a doll to give TOOTS. [*Sighs.*] She'd love a doll. [*Knock is heard. CHUB runs over and admits visitor.*]

Enter EDITH

EDITH: How do you do? I'm EDITH and I've come to your Christmas party because I was so lonesome I cried. May I stay with you?

CHUB: Course you can. We're gettin' up a party for TOOTS an' BUDDIE. [EDITH *takes off her coat and hat.*]

LAURA: 'Cause their ma is awful sick an' they can't have any Chris'mas at their house.

CHUB: We can't have much Chris'mas at our house either, 'cause our ma has to stay an' take care of their ma, but we've got a sack of popcorn.

BEN: An' we've got two sticks of candy for each one of us. I'll let you have some of mine.

LAURA: An' CHUB made a nice top for BUDDIE that can spin.

CHUB: An' we've got a string of beads for TOOTS.

EDITH: That will be fine. Wouldn't she like a doll?

LAURA: Oh, she'd just love a doll, but we didn't have money to get none.

EDITH: Maybe Santa Claus will bring one—I'm most sure he will.

CHUB: No, he won't. Santy won't bring us anything, ma said so. We're so poor he can't. We're dreadful poor.

BEN: 'Cause our pa is dead an' our ma has to work an' it takes so much money with all us childern.

LAURA [*happily*]: But we've got a Christmas tree. Ain't it splendid? CHUB got it from a man who cut it off his tree 'cause it was so big.

CHUB: We didn't have much to trim it with but it looks real nice I think. We made roses out'n red paper LAURA found.

BEN: An' CHUB made the star out'n a piece of tin. Don't it look nice? An' we've got some cookies. [*Laughs.*] I like Chris'mas.

LAURA: I think it's time for TOOTS an' BUDDIE to come. [*Looks off.*] Oh, here they come. [*Children run over.*]

Enter TOOTS and BUDDIE

TOOTS: We can stay a long time an' play. [*Sees tree.*] Oh, oh, a Christmas tree. [*Claps hands.*] BUDDIE, ain't it pretty?

BUDDIE: Oh, it's—aw-ful pretty. [*Gazes at it.*] Is it got presents on for us?

CHUB: I guess there'll be something for you, BUDDIE, 'cause you've been a good boy

TOOTS: An' I hope they's somethin' for me.

LAURA: I'm sure there is.

BEN [*hopping about happily*]: An' mebbe a stick of candy, too.

TOOTS: Oh, goody, goody!

CHUB: Now, I guess it's time to get our presents off'n the tree.

EDITH: No, let's wait a little and see if Santa Claus won't come with some more things for you. Sometimes he has so much to do he can't come till late.

CHUB: Aw, I told you he wouldn't come here. [*Knock is heard.*]

EDITH: I think he's coming now.

Enter SIMS, dressed as Santa, carrying the basket

SIMS [*puts basket back of tree where EDITH can unpack it*]: Well, mebbe you didn't expect Santy Claus, but I'm here an' I hope you're glad to see me. [*The children stare at him breathlessly.*]

CHUB: Oh—a—real—Santy Claus.

LAURA: You didn't mean to come here, did you, Santy?

SIMS: Sure, now, I did. You sit down an' I'll tell you 'bout it. [*He has children sit with their backs to the tree. EDITH quickly ties presents on tree and places them beside it.*] I had so many places to go that I got so tired I fell asleep an' slept so long that I'm jest gettin' to you now. I hope you don't care 'cause I'm late.

BEN [*anxiously*]: Did—you—bring us— somethin'?

SIMS: You look an' see. [*Points. They all look at tree, laugh delightedly and dance about.*]

EDITH: Isn't this a splendid Christmas?

LAURA: Oh, I see—a—doll! Won't TOOTS be glad?

EDITH: There's one for you too. Are you glad?

LAURA: Oh, I want a doll worst of anything, but if they's only one TOOTS must have it.

EDITH: Now Santa Claus will take things off the tree for you, then after he has gone we'll have dinner and play games. Won't that be fun?

BEN: This is the best Chris'mas we've ever had.

EDITH: And it's a merry one for me, too. [*Aside.*] Just as the fairies said. [*Sims gives out presents, children laughing as curtain goes down.*]

CURTAIN .

HERBERT'S DISCOVERY

FOR ONE OLDER BOY AND ONE LITTLE BOY

SCENE: Living room, well furnished. Fireplace in background, but no stockings hanging up

Enter SANTA CLAUS with huge pack of toys

SANTA CLAUS [*in jolly tone*]: Ho! Ho! Ho! Here I am at last. Now, to work. Why—! [*in tone of surprise and dismay*] Where are the stockings? There ought to be some here! I am quite sure that this house was down on my books as containing a boy eight years old. But it would be impossible, unbelievable! that there could exist on the earth an eight-year-old boy who did not hang up a stocking. I can not understand that at all.

Enter little HERBERT in pajamas. He stares with open eyes and mouth at SANTA CLAUS

SANTA CLAUS [*severely*]: What do you mean, young man, by acting like this? Explain yourself, sir.

HERBERT [*dazedly*]: Wh—wh—what?

SANTA CLAUS: Don't you realize that when I come to anybody's house, on purpose to fill a stocking to the brim with all kinds of toys and goodies, I like to find a stocking to fill? Why didn't you hang one up?

HERBERT: I didn't know I was 'sposed to.

SANTA CLAUS: Didn't know you were supposed to! Didn't know you were supposed to! Well, what is this world coming to, anyhow? Who ever heard of a boy who didn't know he was supposed to hang up his stocking on Christmas Eve! Christmas Eve—think of it! And no stocking! [*Commandingly.*] Get one immediately. [*Exit boy. SANTA CLAUS walks fiercely up and down stage, muttering.*]

Enter HERBERT with armful of stockings

HERBERT [*solemnly*]: These are all I have. Will they be enough?

SANTA CLAUS: Well, of all astounding things! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ha! Ha! Ha! You're the most comical case I ever saw. [*More gently.*] Bless your poor little heart! Come, and I'll tell you all about it. [*Sits down in a chair and takes HERBERT on his knee.*]

SANTA CLAUS: You see, I'm SANTA CLAUS. For ages and ages, ever since there have ever been any little boys or girls, they have always belonged to me. After they grow to be men and women, I don't bother so much about them; but as long as they're little, I think of them all the time. But, of course, having so many—just think how many, many children there are in the whole world, HERBERT—I can not be with any of them very often. So I spend my time making things for them, and come once a year, every Christmas Eve, to give them the things. I love all children, and all children love me. At least I always thought before that they did; but you didn't seem to. Didn't even know what my business was.

HERBERT: But I do now. I think you're the nicest man I ever saw in my life. My father's nice, but I don't see him very much.

SANTA CLAUS: Doesn't he live with you?

HERBERT: No, he sings at places. He's in a place called Italy now. I haven't any mother. My Aunt Sarah takes care of me here. She's a pretty old lady, and I guess maybe she doesn't know about you. I read about you in a book I have, but Aunt Sarah told me that I was foolish and that it wasn't true. She's so old, maybe she's forgotten about the time when you used to love her. I don't think she would tell a story, for once I heard my father say that she was a good woman. He said, too, that she was a practical woman. Does "practical" mean forgetting about SANTA CLAUS.

SANTA CLAUS: Yes, yes, that's what it means. Being practical means forgetting about SANTA CLAUS.

HERBERT: Then I'm never going to be practical, 'cause I'm never, never going to forget you. Not if I live to be a hundred-year-old man.

SANTA CLAUS: All right! All this time was well spent if it has made you say that. May you stick to it! [*Sets child down on floor.*] Now, you run and take that ridiculous pile of stockings back to your room. Give me just one. [*Exit HERBERT. SANTA CLAUS fills stocking and then hangs it by fireplace. Exit SANTA CLAUS by one door as boy enters by another. Sound of sleighbells outside.*]

HERBERT: Oh, he's gone! But I know I didn't dream it, 'cause I hear his bells going away. And here is my stocking full of things! I've always had all I wanted, but this is the best way to get things I ever heard of. I'll never miss hanging up my stocking after this, on Christmas Eve. [*HERBERT takes stocking, sits down on floor, and begins to empty it. Delighted exclamations.*]

CURTAIN

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

FOR TWELVE OR MORE CHILDREN

STAGE ARRANGEMENT

At center of back have a screen or curtain which can be drawn for manger scene. There must be room back of this curtain for a rude manger beside which MARY sits while JOSEPH stands at the other side. At one side of stage have a small table with a curtain coming just past the farther end of it, so the angel can get on the table back of the curtain and step forward in view of audience.

COSTUMES

THREE boys dress as SHEPHERDS with loose robes, flowing head-dresses and crooks; one boy dresses as PROPHET with long robe, long white whiskers (can be of crepe paper cut very fine) and a

turban. A tall girl with flowing white robe, takes part of ANGEL. Wings can be of white crepe paper on a wire frame; hair should be worn flowing. MISS CHRISTMAS dresses in white trimmed with bright red and wears a tiara made of wire wound with tinsel. MARY and JOSEPH costumed as shown in Bible pictures.

THE children, including PROPHET and SHEPHERDS, begin to sing just before entering stage. They pass diagonally from corner of back to opposite corner front, across front of stage, diagonally from front to opposite corner of back, then form in two lines across back of stage. They sing while marching (should march slowly) and finish the song while halting across back:

Tune: "ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS"

Come ye, come ye, children; marching as we sing;
Joyful and exultant, let our voices ring;
Christmas time is drawing near, banish care and woe,
Hearts a-light and faces bright, singing now we go.
Merry, Merry Christmas, greeting now we bring;
Merry, Merry Christmas, praise to thee we sing.

DURING the second stanza they march to front of stage abreast, in two rows, pass up right side of stage and again form two rows across the back where they finish the words.

Come ye, come ye, children, as we march along,
Join with ours your voices in a happy song;
Christmas time is drawing near, birthday of the King,
Peace on earth, good will to men, joyously we sing.

[Refrain as before.]

A GIRL [*stepping out and looking off*]:

Oh, MISS CHRISTMAS is coming!
I see her drawing near.
Together let us greet her
With voices of glad cheer.

THEY sing again, very heartily, the refrain; MISS CHRISTMAS enters as they begin, walks slowly across stage to corner of front where she stands, half facing children.

A BOY [*stepping out toward MISS CHRISTMAS*]:

We welcome you, dear MISS CHRISTMAS;

We are glad that you are here.

We were getting most impatient

For our Favorite to appear.

[*Returns to place.*]

MISS CHRISTMAS: Thank you, dear children, for your kind greeting. I am glad to be with you again for I love the boys and girls with their bright faces and sunny smiles. I am glad you enjoy Christmas day because it is the birthday of the babe of Bethlehem. Who can tell me the Old Testament prophecy of the birth of Christ?

PROPHET [*stepping forward*]:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

MISS CHRISTMAS: Now can you tell me the story of the first Christmas?

ALL: And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn.
[*The three SHEPHERDS come to front of stage and sit.*]

ALL: And there were in the same country SHEPHERDS abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [*The ANGEL comes into view upon the table.*]

ALL: And, lo, the ANGEL of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. [*SHEPHERDS bow faces to floor.*] And the ANGEL said unto them:

ANGEL [*raising hand and extending toward SHEPHERDS*]: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

MISS CHRISTMAS: And suddenly there was with the ANGEL a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:

ALL: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the ANGELS were gone away from them into heaven [*the ANGEL withdraws; the SHEPHERDS rise and look at each other*], the SHEPHERDS said one to another:

ONE OF THE SHEPHERDS: Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. [*The SHEPHERDS pass to side of stage and then to the back and stand behind the others.*]

All sing two stanzas of "SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT"

Half of the children move to each side of stage, standing along the side, half facing the back, leaving the SHEPHERDS standing at the back.

MISS CHRISTMAS: And the SHEPHERDS came with haste, and found MARY, and JOSEPH, and the babe lying in a manger. [*Curtain is drawn, showing the scene. A large doll can be used for the babe. The SHEPHERDS kneel. All sing Luther's Hymn*]:

Tune: "FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON"

(First part only)

"Away in a manger no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down his dear head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

"The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes;
I love, Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my bedside till morning is nigh."

MISS CHRISTMAS: Let us treasure in our hearts the beautiful story of the first Christmas day. The baby Jesus came to bring good will and love to the earth and at Christmas time our hearts should be filled with a love for those about us. Remember that while Christmas is a merry day, it is also the day for you to share your joys and bring happiness to someone near you.

ALL: For it is more blessed to give than to receive.

CURTAIN

DOING AWAY WITH CHRISTMAS

FIVE GIRLS AND FIVE BOYS

COSTUMES

FOURTH OF JULY, boy trimmed with flags and bunting; VALENTINE'S DAY, girl trimmed with red hearts; HALLOWE'EN, girl dressed as witch, trimmed with bats and black cats cut from paper; THANKSGIVING, boy dressed as Puritan; LIGHTS, girl trimmed with red crepe paper and carrying candle; GREENS, girl trimmed with evergreen or holly; STOCKINGS, boy decorated with stockings of various sizes and colors; TREE, boy carrying a branch of evergreen; RUTH and JOE, ordinary school clothes.

SCENE—Ordinary stage

Discovered, RUTH, sewing

RUTH [*crossly*]: I'm just as tired as I can be of making Christmas presents. I've made handkerchiefs and bags and hemmed aprons and made JOE a necktie and it's no fun. I wish we could do away with Christmas, so I do. The other holidays don't make us so much work and there are enough of them so that we don't need Christmas. I think I'll write a letter to the president and get him to do away with Christmas entirely.

Enter MISS VALENTINE

VALENTINE: Say, that's a fine idea! I don't see a bit of need of Christmas. There are enough of us without that holiday. For my part, I think VALENTINE'S DAY is fine and if people didn't fuss so over Christmas they could pay more attention to me. You know yourself that it is lovely to get pretty Valentines. I am very willing to help you do away with Christmas.

RUTH: That is kind of you.

Enter FOURTH OF JULY

FOURTH OF JULY: Here comes another one who thinks it will be all right to get along without Christmas. Say, the way folks wear themselves out getting ready for that holiday makes me weary. Now FOURTH OF JULY is different; you can hang up flags and bunting and make a lot of racket without spending so much time beforehand. Folks ought to pay a lot more attention to me than they do, and if there wasn't any Christmas maybe they'd do it. I'm willing to join in this work you are talking of starting.

RUTH: Thank you, FOURTH OF JULY.

Enter HALLOWE'EN

HALLOWE'EN: Here is another who comes to offer her service. The young folks always have lots of fun HALLOWE'EN night, and I, for one, think the day should

be more popular than it is. I am one of the old, old holidays and folks celebrated me long years ago. I think it will be sensible to do away with Christmas and I'm willing to help you.

RUTH: Good for you, HALLOWE'EN.

Enter THANKSGIVING

THANKSGIVING: Well, here's the one who ought to be interested in getting rid of Christmas. Very often THANKSGIVING has to be slighted because Christmas is coming so soon and brings so much work that folks can't observe me as they should. Every one will agree that I am *very* important and if there is one holiday the nation should not slight it is THANKSGIVING; so I am ready to help you work against Christmas. I never *could* understand why people seem to think it is so important.

RUTH: If you all help me we ought to get Christmas wiped off the calendar quite easily.

VALENTINE'S DAY: Sure.

FOURTH OF JULY: It won't be at all difficult.

HALLOWE'EN: People will be glad to get rid of the Christmas work.

THANKSGIVING: And then, as I have long deserved to be, I shall be the important holiday of the year.

VALENTINE'S DAY: Oh, no, I think, if I help with this plan, I should become the most important. I'm so sentimental, you know.

FOURTH OF JULY: Oh, come now! I was planning to step into Christmas' place of notoriety. With all my noise and patriotism I'm sure I am the one for it.

HALLOWE'EN: Pardon me, but I'm sure I am the one the young people will want to make very prominent in the place of Christmas. I can't tell you how they enjoy the witchery and spooky frolics I bring.

THANKSGIVING: No, no, I am the great American holiday and I insist that I be given the most noted place among the holidays.

VALENTINE'S DAY: I'm sorry to seem stubborn, but I insist that I have first place.

FOURTH OF JULY: I feel it is my duty to insist that I be first.

HALLOWE'EN: As I just explained, *I* am the one to become first.

RUTH: Well, dear me, I don't know what we are going to do. I didn't suppose we'd get into such trouble.

VALENTINE'S DAY: There will be no trouble; merely let *me* be first.

FOURTH OF JULY: It's very simple; just let me take first place among the holidays.

HALLOWE'EN: It's easily settled by letting *me* be first.

THANKSGIVING: The only way is to give it to the one that deserves it and *I*—

VALENTINE'S DAY: No, *I*.

FOURTH OF JULY [*loudly*]: No, *I*.

RUTH: Please do not quarrel. The first thing is to banish Christmas.

Enter girl with candle

LIGHTS: I hear you have planned to do away with Christmas. The very idea! You know very well that Christmas is the best day of the year and folks won't give it up. We LIGHTS won't agree to the plan because we just love to shine at Christmas time. We are very cheerful as we send out our golden glow, and everyone enjoys us. You can't banish Christmas.

Enter GREENS

GREENS: What's this I hear about doing away with Christmas? Say, that's a dreadful plan. You'll cause a revolution if you try to carry it out, because the children think it's the best day of the year. We GREENS won't stand for it because we do love to decorate homes and make them look festive at Christmas time. We are a strong force because there are *lots* of us and we'll fight this plan, I assure you.

LIGHTS: Sure we will.

Enter STOCKINGS

STOCKINGS: I just heard the craziest thing—that you're trying to do away with Christmas. I can't see who would start such a foolish plan. The children wouldn't miss Christmas and a chance to hang up their stockings for anything. I want to say that we STOCKINGS will fight that idea because we think the most fun of the year is to be hung up and filled with Christmas presents. We'll fight this scheme.

LIGHTS and GREENS: We surely will.

Enter BOY with Christmas branch

BOY: I just heard of your plan to do away with Christmas. I came right over to tell you it can't be done. The very idea of not having a day for Christmas trees. Don't you know there's nothing lovelier than a green tree shining with candles and loaded with presents? You needn't think the children will give us up and we Christmas trees, who are so proud of being trimmed up and filled with pretty gifts, will fight your plan as hard as we can.

LIGHTS, GREENS and STOCKINGS: And so shall we.

Enter JOE excitedly

JOE: What's this I hear about doing away with Christmas? Don't you know that if you do that there won't be any chance for Santa Claus to come? Think of not

having any good old Santa Claus. This would be a dull old world without him. All the children love the fat old fellow with his jolly smile. You drop this plan right away.

VALENTINE'S DAY: It will be all right if I can be the leading holiday.

FOURTH OF JULY: If I can be first, it won't matter.

HALLOWE'EN [*scornfully to VALENTINE'S DAY and FOURTH OF JULY*]: You two make me tired! Now *I* can take Christmas' place all right.

THANKSGIVING: Santa Claus could come on THANKSGIVING day, then folks would be thankful for their presents. That's a fine idea.

JOE: Now look here, each of you days is all right in your place, but you can't take the place of Christmas day. Who started this plan, I'd like to know?

RUTH: Well, I did. I'm tired of making Christmas presents.

JOE: Then stop making them, but don't try to spoil the best day of the year.

LIGHTS, GREENS, STOCKINGS and BRANCH sing:

Tune: SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

Christmas LIGHT, Christmas LIGHT,
Beaming clear, shining bright;
With a cheerful glimmer they say,
"Keep the blessed Christmas day,
Celebrate it alway, celebrate it alway."

Christmas GREENS, Christmas GREENS,
Brightening the Christmas scenes;
Silently the shining GREENS say,
"Keep the blessed Christmas day,
Do not banish it 'way, do not banish it 'way."

STOCKINGS of toys, STOCKINGS of toys,
 Gifts for girls, gifts for boys;
 TREES and STOCKINGS clearly say,
 "Children love the Christmas day,
 Keep it ever we pray, keep it ever we pray."

JOE: Of course we'll keep Christmas day; can't get along without it. We've got to have the merry time when Santa Claus comes. [*He sings*]:

Tune: MY MARYLAND

There is a man who's very dear,
 Santa Claus, good Santa Claus;
 He brings us presents ev'ry year,
 Santa Claus, good Santa Claus.
 From snowy Northland, far away,
 He comes to brighten Christmas day,
 And Christmas day must stay for aye,
 Day of good old Santa Claus.

LIGHTS, GREENS, STOCKINGS and BRANCH: Can't get along without Christmas and that's a fact!

RUTH: Come to think it over, I don't want to give up Christmas. It really is the best day of the year.

LIGHTS, GREENS, STOCKINGS and BRANCH: Sure it is!

VALENTINE'S DAY: Yes, but as I said—

FOURTH OF JULY [*interrupting*]: If *I* could just have a chance to—

HALLOWE'EN [*interrupting*]: Folks would like me as well if—

THANKSGIVING [*interrupting*]: As I said, If Santa Claus could come on THANKSGIVING day and—

JOE [*interrupting*]: As *I* said, we need each of you, but we can't get along without Christmas. You may as well understand, that—

JOE, RUTH, LIGHTS, GREENS, STOCKINGS and BRANCH:

We'll never, never do away
 With our merry Christmas day.

MERRY CHRISTMAS JAKE

CHARACTERS

JAKE, a newsboy

NED	} Scolding boys	ELLA	} Discontented girls
TIM		MARY	

Enter NED

NED [*crossly*]: I 'spose I've got to go down to the store and find some presents for my folks. It's an awful bother to get ready for Christmas. I don't know what to get for 'em an' when I get in the store there'll be so many things to buy I won't be able to tell which I want. I'll be glad when Christmas is over.

Enter JAKE, carrying papers and whistling

JAKE: I hope I sells all my papers today. [*Whistles.*]

NED: You seem happy.

JAKE: Happy? Course I be—ain't this the time when folks should be merry?

NED: I don't feel very merry; I've got to fool away half the afternoon buying presents. That's not much fun when the skating is good.

JAKE: I've bought some presents already. I think it's heaps o' fun. If I sells all my papers today I'm goin' to buy Maggie's present tonight.

NED: Who's Maggie? Your 'sister?

JAKE: Nope, she's Mis' Daley's little girl an' she's awful cute. She wants a doll for Chris'mus but 'er mother's so poor she can't git 'er one, so I'm goin' to buy it. Mebbe I can sell that feller a paper. [*Runs off.*]

NED: Say, I ought to be ashamed. Here I've got money to buy presents an' a good home, an' I haven't got half the Christmas spirit that poor newsboy has. I call it

pretty fine to take his money to get a doll for that little Maggie. I guess it won't be such a bother to buy the presents for my folks. [*He goes off gaily.*]

Enter ELLA

ELLA [*crossly*]: I wish Christmas wasn't coming at all. I know I won't get the presents I want. The very things I want the worst the folks say I can't have. I don't call it a very merry time when some girls get such lovely presents an' I can't have that ring I want.

Enter JAKE

JAKE [*happily*]: Three of my papers gone already. I bet bizness is goin' to be good today. [*To ELLA.*] Want to buy a paper, Miss?

ELLA: No, I don't. I can't see why you look so happy when you have to sell papers.

JAKE: W'y, it's fun to sell papers an' I'm happy 'cause it's most Chris'mus an' that makes me feel merry all over.

ELLA: Do you 'spose you'll get some nice Christmas presents?

JAKE: Me? Course not—there hain't nobody to give 'em to me 'less ol' Mis' Barney gives me some cookies; but I'm goin' to have a lot o' fun givin' 'em. I've got a big red top that spins awful nice for Teddy. He got his foot hurt las' week. Hi, Mister, want a paper? [*Runs off.*]

ELLA: The idea of being so happy when he isn't going to get any nice presents. He thinks Christmas is merry just because he can give a few things to other folks. [*Thinks.*] Maybe I better stop thinking 'bout what I'm going to get an' see how many things I can give others. I believe I will. [*Goes off happily.*]

Enter TIM

TIM: Christmas isn't going to be any fun this year. Pa says I can't have that watch I want an' it makes me awful mad. Lot of the boys no older than I am have watches an' he could get me one if he wanted to. I don't need it very bad but it would be fine to have to show the boys. Fred Wall thinks he's mighty smart 'cause he's got a watch. I'm madder still 'bout not having a Christmas tree this year. Ma thinks it's so much work to have a tree that we'll hang up our stockings. I can't see any fun in that an' I don't think Christmas is a bit merry.

Enter JAKE, whistling

JAKE: Bizness is fine. [*Whistles.*] Bet this is goin' to be the best Chris'mus I've ever had.

TIM: Huh, I wouldn't whistle if I was paid for it. [*Goes over to JAKE.*] You seem pretty happy today.

JAKE: Who wouldn't be happy with Chris'mus comin'?

TIM: I 'spose you're expecting some nice presents.

JAKE: Nope—don't 'spose I'll git much o' anything, but that ain't the best part o' Chris'mus. Say, we're goin' to have a swell little party on Chris'mus. We're goin' to take some popcorn an' cookies an' a orange an' a sack o' candy over to Red's an' play games. He's a newsboy that got knocked down by a car las' week. Say, mebbe he won't be tickled! We want to git 'im some mittens if we can save 'nuff money.

TIM: Is he as large as I am?

JAKE: Nope, he's real small fer 'is age.

TIM: Say, I've got a fine pair of mittens that's too small for me; I wish you'd take them for him.

JAKE: You bet we will an' glad to git 'em. Mebbe I can sell that guy a paper. [*Runs off.*]

TIM: What do I care if I don't get a watch? I'll get something nice I'm sure. Say, I've got a lot of things I could give this boy for Christmas. I'm going home an' get them. [*Goes off gaily.*]

Enter MARY

MARY: I don't see why folks think Christmas is a merry time—I think it's horrid. Uncle George's folks can't come from Kirby 'cause the baby has the whooping cough, an' so we're not going to have turkey for dinner, only roast chicken. I think Christmas dinner without turkey is horrid. I know I won't have a bit of fun.

Enter JAKE

JAKE: Two more gone. Bet I'll sell 'em all. [*Dances about.*]

MARY: You certainly seem merry.

JAKE: Sure! Ain't Chris'mus the time to be merry? The fellers call me "Merry Chris'mus JAKE" 'cause I'm so happy, but I don't care. It's the best time o' the year an' why shouldn't I be merry?

MARY: Well, I don't feel very merry because we aren't going to have a turkey for dinner—only roast chicken. Isn't that horrid?

JAKE: Only roast chicken? Only ROAST CHICKEN! Gee, I'd call that *some feast*. W'y, I think it's great 'cause I'm goin' to have some cookies with my bread an' soup. But it ain't what you eat that makes Chris'mus merry—it's what you give to folks. Hi, Mister, paper? [*Runs off.*]

MARY: No wonder they call him "Merry Christmas JAKE." He has the real Christmas spirit and I haven't. [*Thinks.*] Maybe I can find some.

Enter ELLA [carries package]

ELLA: Hello, MARY, where you going?

MARY: Going home; can't you come with me?

ELLA: I want to give this package to a newsboy who is trying to give his friends a merry Christmas.

MARY: Oh, I want to give him something, too. He's the one they call "Merry Christmas JAKE." I'll get mother to give me some nice things for his Christmas dinner. He's busy getting things to make other folks happy and we'll give him a surprise by making him happy.

ELLA: That will be fine, and making him happy will make us happy too.

MARY: That's the real spirit of Christmas. Let's hurry.
[*Exeunt.*]

CURTAIN

CORA'S CHRISTMAS VISITORS

CHARACTERS

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS	BEN, the Wreath Boy
CORA, a Sick Girl	HAL, the Stocking Boy
HELEN } The Cooks	JOE } The Gift Boys
RENA } The Cooks	FRED } The Gift Boys
KATE, the Doll Girl	

STAGE ARRANGEMENT

HANG a curtain across the center of stage, back of which CORA'S room can be shown with CORA on a couch, a small table at the head of the couch. Should the stage be too narrow for this, curtain off a room for CORA at the end of stage and place Scene I at the other end of stage. If the curtain is hung across the center of stage, play Scene I in front of the curtain.

SCENE I—No stage setting required

Discovered, HELEN, RENA, KATE, BEN, HAL, FRED and JOE

HELEN: Isn't it fine that Christmas time is here again?
I do think it is the best holiday of the year.

RENA:
The stars above with a golden glow
Look down on candles shining below.

KATE:
And brilliant trees with branches of green
Grace many a festive Christmas scene.

HELEN:
While from east to west the children say,
"We love the merry Christmas day."

RENA and KATE:
Merry, merry Christmas!

BEN:
Holly and evergreen play their part
In bringing Christmas cheer to our heart.

HAL:
While on the air comes the merry ring
Of bells as the children carols sing.

HELEN, RENA, KATE:
Merry, merry Christmas!

FRED:
With jingling of bells and smiles of good will
Santa will come the stockings to fill.

JOE:
And then on Christmas, all the day long
Shall be gay with feasting, laughter and song.

BEN:
So sing the praise of Christmas day,

HELEN, RENA, KATE:

Merry, merry Christmas day.

HAL, FRED, JOE:

So we say, so we say!

ALL:

Merry, merry Christmas day!

Enter SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

SPIRIT OF C.: I am glad you are so fond of Christmas, but let me ask: Are your hearts filled with the true spirit of the day?

HELEN: I hope so.

SPIRIT OF C.: What are you doing to make someone happy? Tell me. [*All look from one to the other.*] I see you need me to set you to work.

HAL: I think perhaps we do.

SPIRIT OF C.: I know a little sick girl who needs some cheer on Christmas morning. Can you take it to her?

ALL: Sure we will.

SPIRIT OF C.: Who can take a basket of food?

RENA: HELEN and I can.

SPIRIT OF C.: I will make you members of the Order of Cooks. [*They kneel before her while she places a white paper cap on the head of each.*] I crown you members of the Order of Cooks; see to it that you fill a basket with goodies. [*They rise.*] Who can give a doll?

KATE: I have one almost new that I can give.

SPIRIT OF C.: Then I shall make you a member of our Order. [*KATE kneels in front of her; she pins a small*

doll on her.] I decorate you a member of the Order of Dolls. See to it that you have one ready. [*To BEN.*] I'll make you the Wreath Boy. Our sick girl must have a bit of Christmas green to cheer her. [*BEN kneels in front of her and SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS pins a bunch of holly on him.*] I decorate you a member of the Order of Christmas Greens. Be sure you bring a wreath for our girl. [*To HAL.*] You shall be the Stocking Boy. [*He kneels in front of her and she pins on him a tiny colored stocking.*] I decorate you a member of the Order of the Christmas Stocking. See that you bring a good-sized one to be filled for our sick girl. [*To FRED and JOE.*] You shall be the Gift Boys. [*They kneel in front of her and she pins a tiny toy on each.*] I decorate you members of the Order of Christmas Gifts. See that there are some toys to fill her stocking. Now you all have your work; be sure that you do it with love and good will. Tomorrow morning I shall expect you to make CORA very happy, and in so doing, be happy yourselves.

ALL [*standing on either side of her*]: We shall try, dear SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS. We'll make some sad heart gay, on Christmas day, on Christmas day.

CURTAIN

SCENE II—At CORA'S home

Discovered, CORA on the couch

CORA: This is Christmas morning. I wouldn't mind being sick if I could have a few presents and something good to eat. How I'd like a little green to look at and a doll to play with. I couldn't hang up a stocking 'cause they've all got holes in an' if I had there wouldn't have been anything in it. Chris'mas isn't a bit merry, not one bit.

[*Enter HELEN and RENA, wearing white caps and carrying basket trimmed with red paper; KATE carrying a prettily-dressed doll; BEN with a wreath of green; HAL with a bright-colored stocking; FRED and JOE with several small packages. All sing*]:

Tune: AULD LANG SYNE

A merry Christmas we bring you,
A merry Christmas day,
A merry Christmas we bring you,
So let your heart be gay.

CORA: Who are you? I'm very glad to see you.

HELEN: We are Santa's Cooks and we've brought you some goodies for a Christmas dinner. [*She and RENA put basket on table.*]

BEN: I have brought you a wreath. What is Christmas without some green? [*He hangs wreath on wall.*]

HAL: I have brought you a stocking to be filled with presents. It's lots of fun to empty it. [*He hangs up the stocking.*]

FRED: A stocking is no good unless it has some presents in it; we've brought you some toys from Santa Claus. [*He and JOE put the packages in the stocking.*]

KATE: I have brought you a doll because Christmas isn't a real Christmas unless a girl gets a doll. I hope you'll like this one. [*Gives it to CORA.*]

CORA [*hugging doll*]: Oh, isn't she lovely! W'y, this is a real Chris'mas with all these splendid things. I thought it wasn't a bit merry, but now it's going to be grand. I wish my ma'd hurry home so she can see.

She's off at work. Say, I couldn't thank you for this if I tried a whole year.

RENA: Then don't try 'cause we're in a hurry. [*The boys and girls go over to side.*]

JOE: So we wish you good-bye and a

ALL: Merry, merry Christmas. [*Exeunt.*]

CORA: It will be, it surely will be merry. [*Loves doll.*]

CURTAIN

Choice Christmas Dialogues and Plays

Grammar Grades

THE JOY OF GIVING

CHARACTERS

MRS. JOYCE

UNCLE JAMES

WILL, her son

NELL WILLIAMS

SCENE—Living room in the JOYCE home

Discovered, MRS. JOYCE, reading. Enter WILL with letter

WILL: Here's a letter from UNCLE JAMES. I wonder what he has to say. Maybe he has decided to pay us that visit he has talked about for six months.

MRS. JOYCE: Very likely. Half the curtains in the house need washing and that is when someone usually comes. [*She takes letter and opens it.*] He hasn't written much. [*Glances through letter.*] Yes, he is coming; will be here tomorrow. I'll have to make a lemon pie and a marble cake. They are his favorite stand-bys.

WILL: Marble cake? Huh, I think that would be a little hard for the teeth of a man of UNCLE's age. Why not make it of a softer material than marble?

MRS. JOYCE: Now don't be smart. You know what a marble cake is, and from the size of some pieces of it I've seen you eat I think you like it almost as well as UNCLE JAMES does. I'll go look his room over and see if it is all right. [*Exit.*]

WILL: I'm glad he's coming. UNCLE is a pretty jolly fellow. Oh, say! [*Thinks.*] He'll be sure to ask me about that book he sent me last Christmas. He will as sure as fate, and he'll want me to read out of it to him. What was it? Oh, yes, a copy of Julius Caesar. It was

a fine book, too—good leather binding. I—the fact is, I gave it to NELL WILLIAMS for a birthday present. I don't care for books like that myself—I like stories of adventure; but I thought NELL would like it because it had such a nice binding. I wish I had it back while UNCLE is here. I'll ask her to borrow it for a few days.

Enter NELL

NELL: Hello, WILL. Your mother said you were here and told me to come right in. I ran over to see about our history lesson for tomorrow. What is it, and do we have anything extra?

WILL: Well, say, it's some lesson. We take the battle of Gettysburg, and have to write a character sketch about a general on the Northern side and one on the Confederate. Some work!

NELL: I should say so. Miss Ellis doesn't care how hard she works us. Well, I must run home and read up about those generals.

WILL: Say, NELL, you know that book, Julius Caesar, that I gave you for a birthday present?

NELL: Sure. It was a dandy—had such a nice leather cover.

WILL: Well, will you let me take it for a few days? I—there's something in it I want to read.

NELL: Good land, can't you read it just as well in any book of Julius Caesar? They all read the same and your father has a set of Shakespeare. I don't see why you need to make me hunt up that copy you gave me.

WILL: Well, I wanted to read it in that special book.

NELL: That's nonsense. I'm rushed to death with work and I can't bother to hunt up that book just for you to read a little. You don't mind, do you? Don't be such a particular fuss-budget. One book is as good as another.

WILL: But I've *got* to have it, NELL.

NELL [*hesitatingly*]: Well, WILL, the truth is, I haven't got it. I—I did something dreadful. I sent it to my Cousin Fred for a present.

WILL [*horrified*]: W'y, NELL WILLIAMS!

NELL: I'm sorry, but I don't care for Shakespeare; I like stories. Cousin Fred likes books of any kind so I sent it to him. I hope you don't mind.

WILL: But I do mind. I've got to have that book.

NELL: I can't see why you must have that special copy.

WILL: The truth is, UNCLE JAMES sent it to me for a Christmas present. He's coming to visit us and he'll be sure to ask to see it. I don't know what he'll say if he finds I gave it away.

NELL: There! You thought it was awful because I gave it away, but it was worse for you when your UNCLE sent it to you for Christmas. You needn't say anything more to me. [*Goes off haughtily.*]

WILL: Oh, the joy of giving! What will UNCLE say to me?

CURTAIN

SCENE II—Room as before

Discovered, WILL and UNCLE JAMES

UNCLE J.: Well, WILL, it's good to see you again. How are you getting along in school? Doing pretty good work? I hope you're not flunking in any of your studies.

WILL: No, I'm getting along all right. Might do better in some studies but I wasn't cut out for a book worm.

UNCLE J.: Speaking of books, how did you like that copy of Julius Caesar I sent you for Christmas? Pretty fine, eh?

WILL: Yes, it was fine; splendid binding; interesting, too.

UNCLE J.: I'm very fond of Shakespeare and I hope you will be. I think his works are splendid reading for young people. Julius Caesar is especially good to my notion. I suppose you've read it quite a bit.

WILL: Oh, yes. [*Aside.*] I mean I haven't.

UNCLE J.: I suppose you have some favorite passages learned. I know a great many of them myself. Let me hear you say some.

WILL [*hesitatingly*]: That's a good one that says—"All's well that ends well," and—oh, yes, that one about "To be or not to be; whether it is nobler to— —" well, you know how it goes.

UNCLE J. [*amazed*]: I hope you don't think either of them are in Julius Caesar! The idea! I'm surprised at you, I am indeed.

WILL: You see, it's quite awhile since I read it and—

UNCLE J.: I think you *have* forgotten. You get your book and I'll show you some parts I want you to read to me.

WILL: W'y—I don't need to bother to get mine, do I? I can read out of father's set; it's handy here.

UNCLE J.: No, I want you to get your own book so I can mark some passages for you. Get it now.

WILL: The fact is, UNCLE, it isn't here now. I let a friend have it.

UNCLE J.: Then you get it so we can read from it to-morrow.

WILL: I can't. The truth is, I gave it away for a present—it was so fine, you know.

UNCLE J. [*angrily*]: Gave away the present I sent you? Gave away a Christmas present? What kind of a fellow are you? The idea!

Enter MRS. JOYCE

MRS. JOYCE: UNCLE JAMES, didn't you bring the slippers with you that I sent you last Christmas? I was in hopes I'd see you wearing them while you are here. They would be so comfortable.

UNCLE J.: Yes, they're very comfortable. I thought it was very kind in you to send them to me. Such a pretty color, pink and blue.

MRS. JOYCE: Pink and blue? W'y, they were brown and yellow.

UNCLE J.: Oh, yes, I meant brown and yellow. Very pretty and comfortable.

MRS. JOYCE: I suppose you wear them every day at home.

UNCLE J.: Well, not—every day.

MRS. JOYCE: I want to see you wearing them here. I'm going to send Maria a note and tell her to send them. They will get here by day after tomorrow.

UNCLE J.: Now don't bother for such a short time as I'll be here.

MRS. JOYCE: It is no bother and you'll be here three weeks.

UNCLE J.: But Maria—can't find them.

MRS. JOYCE: Oh, yes she can.

UNCLE J. [*desperately*]: But—the truth is—I gave them away. I don't care for crocheted slippers. I gave them to the minister for his birthday. I hope you don't mind.

MRS. JOYCE: But I *do* mind.

WILL [*happily*]: Shake, UNCLE JAMES. We're in the same boat.

UNCLE J.: You know there is so much joy in giving that—

WILL: That we give away anything we can. You forgive me and mother will forgive you.

UNCLE J.: All right.

MRS. JOYCE [*crossly*]: I don't know about that.

CURTAIN

THE PICKETTS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

CHARACTERS

MR. PICKETT

MARIA, his wife

LON HEMWAY, crippled boy of about thirteen

JASON GREEN, deaf but cheerful

ROSE DEAN, happy orphan about twelve years old

MRS. BROWN, fat and sickly

DAN PICKETT, the absent son

SCENE I—The PICKETT's living room

Discovered, MR. and MRS. PICKETT

MRS. PICKETT: I guess we won't try to keep Christmas this year. So long's there's only the two of us an' money is scarce we can get along without any fussing. My sickness cost so much that we'll have to be real saving.

MR. PICKETT: Yes, I 'spose so. It'll seem dreadful lonesome not to have a little Chris'mus. I'll git a big armful of evergreen to trim up with—that'll help some an' won't cost none.

MRS. PICKETT: That'll be fine. I'll make a big dried apple pie an' put raisins in it—that'll be cheap an' real tasty, too.

MR. PICKETT: Yep, your dried apple pies are most as good's mince. An' we've got that popcorn we can use an' the nuts from the ol' hick'ry tree an' they's some of them Baldwin apples left.

MRS. PICKETT: Now, that was fine you spoke of 'em—I'll make a nice nut cake. Don't you recollect how DANNY used to like 'em?

MR. PICKETT: Yep, he thought they's 'bout the best thing he could git hold of. Wish he was going to be here for Chris'mus.

MRS. PICKETT: So do I. It's an awful long time sence he's been home. [*Sighs.*] But don't help none to fuss 'bout it. We'll have to do without 'im, same's usual. We've got some 'taters an' squash an' a cabbage; now if we had a nice chicken to roast we'd have a fine dinner.

MR. PICKETT: We've got some beef left. A good roast won't be so bad.

MRS. PICKETT: 'Course not; it'll be good 'nuff.

MR. PICKETT: Seems to me like we'd ought to ask in somebody to have dinner with us.

MRS. PICKETT: W'y AMOS PICKETT, not to sech a meal's that on Chris'mus. What'd they think?

MR. PICKETT: It'd be alright fer the folks I had in mind; somebody that's worse off'n we be. Now, LEM HEMWAY, fer instance, that'll be alone 'cause his mother's off takin' care of 'er sister. An' JASON GREEN who'll likely have to eat by 'imself.

MRS. PICKETT: Alright, you ask them two an' we'll try to make 'em have a real good time. I'll start gettin' nuts ready for the cake right off. [*Starts over.*]

MR. PICKETT: Now, MARIA, you make a big 'un an' better make two pies, in case we'd want to ask somebody else. Seein' we can't spend money we'll try to scatter a little cheer.

MRS. PICKETT: Well, if you say so. It'll be better'n bein' alone. [*Exit.*]

MR. PICKETT: Now that MARIA's started I bet she'll git up a good dinner without spendin' anything. [*Thinks.*] Now there's MIS' BROWN, she's alone an' she'd like awful well to come. I'll ask 'er, too. Mebbe she can work off some of 'er fat yellin' at JASON GREEN. He's most as deaf as a barndoor but he'll enjoy 'is dinner. An' ROSIE DEAN, the Benson's left 'er alone while they've gone visitin'—I'll ask ROSIE, too. Guess I'll start out

now an' ask 'em so's it'll be done. I'll pop corn an' MARIA can make some stockin's out o' that skeeter nettin' we've got so's they can all have one. I bet this'll be the bes' Chris'mus we've had in a long time. Here goes fer the invitin'. [*Fusses with hair and necktie, then goes off.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II—Same as above

Discovered, MR. PICKETT, eating cake

MR. PICKETT: Say, this cake is good alright. MARIA gave me a little bite of her sample an' it tastes jest like more. Seems to me it's 'bout time some of the visiters was comin'. [*Knock is heard. He goes over and admits company.*] Come in. Merry Chris'mus. Glad to see ye.

Enter LON HEMWAY walking with crutch

LON: Merry Chris'mus, MR. PICKETT, an' a lot of 'em. This is sure fine in you to ask me over. Guess I wouldn't been very merry at home. Beats all how a feller gets lonesome on Chris'mus. Yisterday I didn't mind stayin' alone, but today, 'cause it's Chris'mus, I felt like I'd mos' die if I couldn't go somewheres. Yes, sir, bet I'd a been dead by night if I'd stayed home. [*Sits.*]

MR. PICKETT: Glad I saved yer life. It's sort o' bad to have fun'rals in winter, flowers is so scarce. [*Knock is heard.*] Here comes somebody else. [*Goes over.*]

LON: Gee, is somebody else comin'? Ain't that fine?

Enter MRS. BROWN made up very fat

MRS. BROWN: Merry Chris'mus, MR. PICKETT, Merry Chris'mus. [*Drops into a chair.*] I wasn't hardly able to come over today, I'm feelin' so mis'abul, but I says to myself, says I, I might jest as well git sick comin' over here as to git sick feelin' bad 'cause I couldn't come, so here I be. Merry Chris'mus, LON, how you feelin'? [*Takes off shawl and hat.*]

LON: Fine, jes' fine. Chris'mus parties agrees with me splendid.

MR. PICKETT: What seems to be the matter, MRS. BROWN?

MRS. BROWN: Well, comical rheumatiz fer one thing.

MR. PICKETT: Didn't know they was any sech thing as comical rheumatiz. Didn't 'spose they was nothin' funny 'bout it.

MRS. BROWN: Well, mebbe—oh, I guess it ain't comical; it's 'cute rheumatiz, but 'cute an' comical means the same. An' my liver's been actin' up, too. Doctor says I've got too much bile—mebbe 'cause I had biled dinner twice las' week.

MR. PICKETT: It's too bad you ain't feelin' good 'cause now I'm 'fraid you can't eat much dinner. MARIA's made an awful good nut cake an' some pies.

MRS. BROWN: No, I can't eat much—jest some meat an' 'taters an' some vegetables, an' a few slices o' bread, an' some pickles an' jelly an' a few cups o' coffee, an' a piece o' pie an' a piece er two o' cake—but I won't be able to make out a real meal, seein' how I feel.

LON: Wal, I 'spose you ought to be glad you can eat a little mite like you mentioned.

MRS. BROWN: La, yes, I'm glad; but I *do* enjoy a reg'lar meal. [*Knock is heard. MR. PICKETT goes over.*]

MR. PICKETT: Come in, JASON. Merry Chris'mus. Feelin' pretty well?

Enter JASON GREEN

MR. GREEN: Yes, it's a real cold spell. [*Takes off cap and long scarf.*] Merry Chris'mus, Mis' BROWN. [*He sits.*]

MRS. BROWN: Merry Chris'mus. Have you heard from your brother Jake lately?

MR. GREEN: Toothache? No, I ain't had the toothache fer better'n three years. Good reason why, ain't got hardly no teeth left to ache. [*Laughs.*]

MRS. BROWN: I said have you heard from Jake lately.

MR. GREEN: ' Yes, it *has* been real pleasant lately; fust-rate weather fer Chris'mus, I think. [*Knock is heard. MR. PICKETT goes over.*]

MR. PICKETT: Come in, ROSIE. Merry Chris'mus.

Enter ROSE DEAN

ROSE: Merry Chris'mus, ev'rybody. [*They answer.*] Oh, goody, this is a real party. [*Takes off her things and sits.*] How you been feelin', LON?

LON [*soberly*]: Not very well; been havin' rheumatiz in my wooden leg [*waves crutch*] an' it makes it hard fer me to walk.

ROSE: Oh, come now, LON, if it's the wood that gits rheumatiz, I'd say you ought to have it in yer head. [*Others laugh.*]

MR. GREEN: What you folks laughin' at? Sometimes I don't hear good.

MRS. BROWN: ROSIE thinks LON's head is made o' wood.

MR. GREEN: I don't see's we need any more wood. I'm plenty warm.

Enter MRS. PICKETT

MRS. PICKETT: Merry Chris'mus, folks. [*She shakes hands.*] I'm dreadful glad to see you. Hope you'll excuse me fer not comin' in sooner, but I had to look after the dinner. [*She sits.*]

MR. PICKETT: That's alright, MARIA. We're fine without any lookin' after, but the dinner ain't.

MR. GREEN: This is Chris'mus day and folks ought to give presents, so I'll give each one of you a present. [*Fumbles in pocket and gets out a small sack.*] I bought 'nuff so's they'd be one for all of ye. [*He passes around a sack of peppermints. Each take one.*] I think they're real good an' they're healthy, too. Won't make ye sick. [*He sits.*]

MRS. BROWN: Humph! I guess *one* pep'mint lozeng wouldn't make a body sick. [*They all eat candy.*]

MR. GREEN: What say, MIS' BROWN?

MRS. BROWN: I said these is real good.

MR. GREEN: Yes, I'm gittin' real hungry, too.

ROSE: Oh, let's play a game.

LON: I say so, too.

MRS. PICKETT: What shall we play?

ROSE: Roll the platter.

MR. PICKETT: W'y, we can't roll it—we've got to have it to put the meat on fer dinner.

ROSE: We don't need the real platter; a tin plate will do. I'll find one. [*She runs off and comes back soon with a tin pie plate.*]

MR. GREEN: Oh, I though ye was bringin' somethin' to eat.

ROSE: Don't you want to play roll the platter?

MR. GREEN: No, I didn't eat very much breakfast, 'cause I was comin' here fer dinner, you know.

ROSE: Now, MR. PICKETT, you spin it an' call somebody's name an' that person has to catch the plate 'fore it stops spinning an' falls down.

MR. PICKETT: Alright. [*He stands at center of stage and spins plate.*] I'll call MIS' BROWN.

MRS. BROWN: Land suz! I can't ketch it, I'm too fat.
[*She gets up and makes a dive for the plate, misses it and falls in a heap on the floor.*]

ROSE: Oh, you missed it, MIS' BROWN. [*They all laugh.*]

MR. GREEN: What's she tryin' to git that plate for when they ain't anything on it to eat?

MRS. BROWN: This will make my rheumatiz worse.

LON: Maybe it'll cure it.

MR. PICKETT: We'll help you up, MIS' BROWN. [*All the others get around her and finally help her get to her feet.*]

MRS. BROWN: Now, ROSIE, you jest think o' some other game. We ain't goin' to play this no more. [*They help her get seated.*]

ROSE: Oh, let's play charades. They're lots o' fun.

LON: How do you do' em?

ROSE: All of you but MIS' PICKETT an' MR. GREEN go in the other room an' I'll fix 'em so you'll guess what they're actin' out.

MRS. BROWN: Don't know as I can move but I'll try.
[MR. PICKETT, MRS. BROWN and LON *exeunt.*]

ROSE: Now, MIS' PICKETT, you stand here [*places her at center of stage*], an' MR. GREEN you kneel in front of her an' hold her hand.

MR. GREEN: What's this?

ROSE [*shouts in his ear*]: It's a game.

MR. GREEN: Well, I'm game. [*ROSE makes him kneel in front of MRS. PICKETT and hold her hand.*]

ROSE: Now you stay just this way an' I'll git the others to come in an' guess what word you're actin' out. [*She runs off.*]

Enter DAN PICKETT, *quickly, carrying large basket*

DAN: Say, what does this mean? [*Sets down basket quickly.*] You blamed ol' pop-eyed geezer, what you makin' love to my mother for? [*He grabs GREEN and jerks him away.*]

MRS. PICKETT: Oh, DANNY, DANNY, have you come home? [*Tries to put her arms around his neck.*] You dear boy!

DAN [*angrily*]: You needn't try to hug me—letting that ol' shrimp make love to you. Is pa dead?

Enter MR. PICKETT, MRS. BROWN, ROSE and LON

MR. PICKETT: What's all the fuss about? [*Looks at DAN.*] Who's this?

MRS. PICKETT: Oh, it's our darling DANNY.

DAN: You're a bad woman. [*Points to his mother.*]

MR. GREEN: I don't see what all this means.

DAN: You quit makin' love to my mother.

MR. GREEN: I wasn't makin' love; I'm a game.

DAN: I'll make game of ye an' use a gun on ye.

MR. PICKETT: I swan it is DANNY. [*Shakes hands.*] Ain't this splendid to have you home for Chris'mus!

ROSE: Oh, he spoiled our game!

MRS. PICKETT: Oh, you darling boy, to git here jest when dinner's ready. [*She hugs him.*]

DAN: I wasn't sure you'd have enough for me to eat so I stopped down here an' got a turkey all ready roasted.

MRS. PICKETT: Oh, that is all we needed to make our dinner fine. I'll have it ready right away. [*She hurries out, DAN following with the basket.*]

LON [*yelling at MR. GREEN*]: TURKEY!

MR. GREEN: What kind o' Turkey—the land where them bad folks live? They all need killin'.

ROSE [*loudly*]: It's already killed an' roasted an' ready to EAT!

Enter DAN

DAN: Dinner's ready, folks. Forward, march!

MR. GREEN: Suits me, fine. [*They march off as curtain goes down.*]

CURTAIN

THE HORTONS' CHRISTMAS TRIP

CHARACTERS

MR. HORTON, retired farmer	AGENT, at railroad station
MRS. HORTON, his wife	FATTY, salesboy at station
HENRY, their up-to-date son	A TRAMP
MARIE, the polished daughter	MRS. BALL
DORA, the maid	FRED
SUE, NELL and BESS	NETTIE

} Her children

SCENE I—Living room in Horton home

Discovered, MR. and MRS. HORTON

MR. HORTON: Well, ma, what are we goin' to do fer Christmas?

MRS. HORTON: Long as HENRY and MARIE are to be home I think we ought to have a nice Chris'mas tree, an' decorate the house, an' have a big dinner, an' enjoy a reg'lar old-fashioned Chris'mas.

MR. HORTON: Suits me fine! Seems like Chris'mus ain't Chris'mus unless we have a tree an' do things up like we used to.

MRS. HORTON: I don't know what HENRY an' MARIE will think of it, but I guess they'll like it.

MR. HORTON: Well—mebbe they will;—they're so sort of—up-to-date there's no tellin what'll suit 'em.

MRS. HORTON [*sighing*]: Yes, that's so. Since we sent 'em away to school they're—sort of—diff'rent.

MR. HORTON: Yes, too much so to suit me.

Enter HENRY

MRS. HORTON: HENRY, I want to ask you 'bout what we'll do Chris'mas.

HENRY: Christmas? Oh, yes, I hope you haven't planned up a lot of old-fashioned dope that you'll expect me to stay here and put up with.

MRS. HORTON: W'y, HENRY, you used to think Chris'mas was grand an' you weren't happy unless we had a tree an' Santy Claus.

HENRY: Good land, mother, that was when I was young. You can't expect me to care about such things now that I'm a young man. You can't seem to remember that I have been away to school. [*Struts across room.*]

MR. HORTON: I didn't know folks ever got too old to enjoy Chris'mus.

HENRY: Father! How old-fashioned you are. I do wish you'd try to keep up a little better with the times. It's a wonder you don't want me to hang up my socks on Christmas eve.

MR. HORTON: Guess it wouldn't hurt you none.

HENRY: Your ideas are dreadful. But speaking of Christmas, I came in to talk over that very thing with you. I have been invited to spend a week with one of my school friends. His folks have a cottage in the hills and a party of us are going there for a good time. I don't see, father, why you can't have a cottage in the mountains and one at the seashore.

MR. HORTON: No, I 'spose you don't. So you want to go off there instead o' stayin' home with us fer Chris'mus?

HENRY: Goodness, father, it would bore me to death here. Can't you let me have fifty dollars so I can start right away?

MR. HORTON: Fifty dollars is a lot of money.

HENRY: Well, that can be my Christmas present. I surely don't want you folks spending money for presents I don't care about. I'm sure you won't mind my going.

MRS. HORTON: I suppose he may as well go, pa, if he can't enjoy Chris'mas with us.

MR. HORTON: Yes, I 'spose so.

HENRY: Oh, thank you! We'll have no end of a jolly time. I'll have to see about getting my things ready.
[Hurries out.]

MRS. HORTON [*sadly*]: It'll seem lonesome with him gone Chris'mas.

Enter MARIE

MARIE: Oh, folks, I'm just all thrilled up! I've been wondering how I'd ever stand Christmas here, it's so quiet, you know, after being away at school, and all the old-fashioned Christmas festivities are so tiresome, you know, and it seems so silly for us to have a tree now that we're old enough to go away to school, you know, but now things are coming out just fine.

MR. HORTON: I 'spose you're gettin' too smart to enjoy Chris'mus, too.

MARIE: Mercy, father, don't speak so! You act as if we ought to keep up all our little baby ideas about Christmas. But do let me tell you my good luck. One of the girls, she's awfully dear and sweet, and her folks have lovely things, you know, and they're dreadfully up-to-date, and she has asked me to stay a week with her—it's a Christmas house party, you know. Isn't that wonderful? We'll have a grand time. You'll let me go, won't you? It won't cost more than thirty or forty dollars.

MRS. HORTON: I'm 'fraid we'll be pretty dull here with you children gone.

MARIE: Oh, now, you and father won't mind. You know you've written for Sarah to come home with the children. You can have a tree for them and have a lot of fun. You'll let me go, won't you?

MR. HORTON: Oh, I 'spose so.

MARIE: Oh, thanks, very much. I'm crazy about it. Now I must go see about my dresses. You'll have to help me pack my things, mother. Oh, I'm dreadfully thrilled. [*Hurries out.*]

MRS. HORTON: I'm glad we wrote for Sarah and her family to come home. We'll have a good time with our gran'children anyway.

MR. HORTON: Yes, we can have a tree for 'em.

Enter DORA [Carries letter on tray.]

DORA: Here's a letter that jest came, ma'am, an' I thought mebbe you'd be anxious to read it, 'cause it's from the place where your married daughter, Sarah, lives. I wasn't tryin' to find out who it's from, ma'am, of course, 'cause you well know I ain't that kind, ma'am, but I jest happened to notice it. I 'spose mebbe it's tellin' 'bout Chris'mus an' so I brought it right in for you to read, ma'am. I 'spose mebbe she's a comin' home with them nice little childern o' hers an' spend Chris'mus. [*Gives letter to MRS. HORTON.*]

MRS. HORTON: Thank you, DORA. How are you gettin' on with the cookin'? We want plenty of mince pies made, an' cookies, an' cakes an' plum puddin'.

DORA: Things is comin' fine, ma'am. We'll have lots o' good things to eat. You jest ought to see the shelves I've got filled up already. [*Exit.*]

MR. HORTON: Read what Sary says, ma.

MRS. HORTON: I feel like it'll be bad news. [*Opens letter and reads.*]

MR. HORTON: What does she say, ma?

MRS. HORTON: They can't come for Chris'mas. Seems like her husban' has to go to Chicago on a trip an' they're goin' to have Chris'mas there with his cousin. [*Sighs.*] Now ain't that too bad?

MR. HORTON: What'll we do here all alone in this big house? It'll be dreadful lonesome for the two of us.

MRS. HORTON: We won't stay here. We'll go some place.

MR. HORTON: Where'll we go?

MRS. HORTON [*with spirit*]: We'll go to the city. We'll stay at a big hotel an' go to shows an' have a good time.

MR. HORTON: That's jest what! I guess we can find lots to keep us from gittin' lonesome in the city. We'll have a real Chris'mus spree.

MRS. HORTON [*Rings bell.*]: I'll tell DORA we're goin'.

Enter DORA

DORA: I 'spose I know what you want to say, ma'am, an' it's that your daughter Sarah is comin' to spend Chris'mus with us, ain't it now?

MR. HORTON: You'll have to guess once more, DORA.

DORA: Oh, now, you don't mean to say that she ain't comin'?

MR. HORTON: That's more like it.

MRS. HORTON: No, they can't come an' HENRY's invited away, an' MARIE is going off to a house party an' so we've decided not to have any Chris'mas.

DORA: Well, now, I declare. What's goin' to be done with all the cookin' that's been got ready?

MR. HORTON: Oh, it'll keep till we git back. We'll only be gone a few days. Don't you want to go spend Chris'mus with some of your folks?

DORA: Oh, I'll say I do! My sister's havin' a big party an' she wants worse way for me to come, but I 'sposed I couldn't git off. I'll be awful tickled to go.

MRS. HORTON: Well, you jest get ready an' go.

DORA: Alright, ma'am. Now ain't it splendid I got me that new dress last week? I'll look swell when I git fixed up. [*Hurries out.*]

MRS. HORTON: We'll go tomorrow. I'll see 'bout our things. [*Exit.*]

MR. HORTON: I don't like this idee of runnin' off to find Chris'mus, but I guess it's the best we can do. Seems like the good old merry-Chris'mus-days has gone, an' I don't like it. [*Walks floor sadly as curtain drops.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II—At the station

SET the stage with a number of seats and a small table at one end for the ticket AGENT.

Discovered, the AGENT at his desk

AGENT: That FATTY left some of his papers on the seats. I'll have to git after him. [*Calls.*] Hey, you FATTY, Come 'ere. [*Pause.*] I'd like to know what he's doin'. [*Calls.*] FATTY, oh FAT!

Enter FATTY, lazily

FATTY: Wot you want, JEREMIAH? You act like you's excited.

AGENT: Excited? Say, I'll git so excited that something'll happen if you don't quit leavin' your papers 'round the waitin' room. You git 'em picked up. I'll skin you in 'bout a minute, you lazy bundle o' fat.

FATTY: Here, now, that ain't nice to talk like that. Don't you know that Chris'mus is a time of peace an' good will? You'd ought to love me, JEREMIAH, 'stead o' talkin' so mean.

AGENT: I'll love you with a stick if you don't git busy an' tend to your work. You pick up them papers. [FATTY goes lazily about, singing and picking up papers.]

Enter MR. and MRS. HORTON, carrying suit cases and packages

MRS. HORTON: I do hope the train/ain't gone.

MR. HORTON: Gone nothin'! We're a half hour early. You allus want to start too early. [Exit FATTY.]

MRS. HORTON: Well, if I didn't git here early I'd be sure to miss the train. [She sits.]

MR. HORTON: I'll git the tickets. [Goes over and gets tickets.]

Enter NELL, SUE and BESS

NELL: Ain't it fun to have Chris'mas come?

BESS: Oh, say, I jus' love it. I bet I'll git some peachy presents.

SUE: I'm goin' to the swellest Chris'mas party. [They sit and eat peanuts.]

MR. HORTON [coming over]: Well, I got the tickets. [Sits by MRS. HORTON.]

Enter TRAMP

TRAMP: How much is a ticket to Morrow?

AGENT: Costs just the same tomorrow as it does today. Where you want to go?

TRAMP: To Morrow.

AGENT: Well, you can go tomorrow if you want to, but what place you want to go to?

TRAMP: I want to go to the village of Morrow where me wife an' fourteen childern lives.

AGENT: Oh, I see! Goin' home for Chris'mas, I 'spose.

MRS. HORTON: My, my, to think he's got fourteen childern.

TRAMP: How much does a ticket cost?

AGENT: Return ticket?

TRAMP: Wot kind's that?

AGENT: W'y, that brings you back again.

TRAMP: Don't need to be brought back. I'm here now.

AGENT: Say, do you want to buy a ticket?

TRAMP: Will you charge it till next week?

AGENT: Say, you git out o' this. Git out, I say.

TRAMP [*grinning*]: Alright. Merry Chris'mus to ye.
[*Starts out.*]

MRS. HORTON: Mister, wait a minute. [*Goes over to TRAMP.*] Say, won't you take these cookies along for your childern? [*Gives him a bag.*] They're real nice an' we don't need 'em. Fourteen childern is an awful lot.

TRAMP: It is, mum, an' they is awful fond o' cookies; thank ye, mum. [*Comes to front.*] Gee, won't I have a feast? [*Goes out grinning.*]

Enter MRS. BALL with NETTIE and FRED, carrying packages

MRS. BALL: Come over here an' sit till the train comes in. [*They sit.*]

Enter FATTY with basket of confections

FATTY: Peanuts, popcorn, chewing gum an' candy.
[*Walks about.*] Peanuts, popcorn, chewing gum an' candy.

SUE: Let's buy some candy.

NELL: No, let's have popcorn—it goes farther.

BESS: Yes, let's have popcorn. I'm gettin' short on money, I've spent so much for Chris'mus presents.
[*They buy some popcorn.*]

FRED: Say, ma, can't we have some popcorn?

NETTIE: Oh, ma, can't we have a little bit of candy?

MRS. BALL: No, not now. [*She whispers to them.*]

AGENT: Say, FATTY, do you know where that boy is that delivers telegrams? I've got a telegram for MRS. BALL. We'll have to find that boy.

MRS. BALL: Oh, I wonder! [*Rises.*] Did you say the telegram is for MRS. BALL? That's my name.

AGENT: It's for MRS. MATILDA BALL.

MRS. BALL: Yes, that is my name. Oh, I wonder what it says. [*She goes over.*]

AGENT: You can soon tell by readin' it, what it says.
[*Gives MRS. BALL the telegram.*]

MRS. BALL: I know it's bad news. [*Goes over and sits.*]

MRS. HORTON: I hope the train comes soon. I'm real anxious to git to the city. We'll have a fine time, pa, goin' 'round an' seein' the sights. I guess it'll be more fun than stayin' at home an' havin' a Chris'mas tree.
[*MRS. BALL has opened telegram and read it. She begins to cry.*]

NETTIE: What's the matter, ma? What you cryin' 'bout?

FRED: Ma, don't cry. You make me feel bad. [*He starts to cry.*]

MRS. BALL: Oh, dear, dear! [*Cries.*]

NETTIE: Ma, don't cry. [*She starts to cry.*]

MRS. HORTON: She's got bad news. [*Goes to MRS. BALL.*]
I hope you didn't have bad news in your telegram.

MRS. BALL: Yes, my husban's sick in the hospital an' can't come home. We expected him on this train. Oh, dear! He was goin' to bring home some money; now I ain't got a cent left to get anything for the children's Chris'mus. Oh, dear, dear! Poor William! I don't know what I'll do.

NETTIE: Oh, now we can't have any Chris'mus dinner.

FRED: An' we can't have no Chris'mus presents in our stockin's.

SUE: Isn't that a shame?

NELL: I'll say it is.

BESS: They won't have a very merry Chris'mus.

MR. HORTON: Hi, boy, come here. [*FATTY goes over and MR. HORTON buys a sack of popcorn for FRED and one for NETTIE and gives them while MRS. HORTON tries to comfort MRS. BALL.*]

MRS. HORTON: Pa, you come here. [*She takes MR. HORTON down in front.*] Now, I want to tell you, I ain't goin' a step to the city. I don't think it'll be a bit o' pleasure at Chris'mus time.

MR. HORTON: W'y, I thought you wanted to go.

MRS. HORTON: Well, I don't. I'm goin' to stay home an' so're you an' we're goin' to take this woman an' her two childern home with us an' have a Chris'mus party an' a Chris'mus tree an' have a splendid time.

MR. HORTON: Suits me fine! You're some planner. I ain't much fer gaddin' 'round at Chris'mus, an' this woman needs some help. I'll see 'bout givin' the tickets back. [*Goes to AGENT.*]

Enter TRAMP

TRAMP: Say, seems like that train to Morrow ain't goin' till tomorrow.

MRS. HORTON [*to TRAMP*]: Oh, mister man, I want to give you these for your childern. Fourteen is *such* a lot. [*She gives him some packages that she and MR. HORTON brought.*] This is our lunch an' now we won't need it.

TRAMP [*happily at front*]: Holy smoke! Won't I have a merry Chris'mus! [*Exit.*]

MRS. HORTON [*to MRS. BALL*]: Now don't you feel a bit bad. You're goin' home with us fer Chris'mas. We've got a big house an' nobody in it, an' a lot o' stuff baked an' nobody to eat it, an' we'll have a Chris'mus tree fer the childern.

MR. HORTON [*coming over*]: Yes, ma an' me is awful fond o' Chris'mus trees. Come on, we'll go right home now. [*Starts to get his baggage.*]

NETTIE: Oh, we *will* have a merry Chris'mas, won't we?

MR. HORTON: That's what we will — a MERRY CHRIS'MUS!

CURTAIN

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER

FOR TWO LITTLE GIRLS, ONE OLDER GIRL, AND TWO
LARGE BOYS

SCENE: Kitchen, cookstove, table containing utensils and several loaves of fresh-baked bread

Discovered, MRS. HARDY and little daughter, ALICE, in gingham aprons. MRS. HARDY bastes turkey, and shuts oven door

MRS. HARDY: Now, ALICE, I must go upstairs and see how your grandmother is. The doctor said that she must have very good care. You watch the turkey, and attend

to it—that's a good girl! Your father will be home soon from his mail-route; and we shall have our Christmas dinner together. [*Exit. Little girl's voice calls from outside.*]

LITTLE GIRL: ALICE, oh ALICE! [*ALICE opens outside door. Enter EMILY ANDREWS, child about ALICE's age, in winter coat and cap.*]

EMILY: Hello, ALICE! I have come to see your Christmas gifts, and I want you to come to my house to see mine.

ALICE: Oh, I am so glad you came, EMILY. Just wait a minute and I'll get my presents. [*Exit a moment. Returns carrying stocking filled with candy and nuts, and an assortment of dolls, books and toys. The little girls examine everything and talk about them.*]

EMILY: Now, ALICE, you must come over to my house and see my things. I can hardly wait to show them to you.

ALICE: Mamma said I should stay in the kitchen here and watch the turkey.

EMILY: Oh, you don't need to do that. The turkey won't run off, and you can be back before you have to do anything to it.

ALICE: All right! [*Gets hat and coat and goes out with EMILY. After a short time a knock is heard at the door. When there is no answer, the door is pushed open and a poorly dressed man peeps cautiously in. Enter stealthily.*]

MAN: I have never been a thief before. I thought I should never come to stealing; but I shall not have my wife and little girl go hungry on Christmas Day if I can help it. [*He takes turkey out of oven and one loaf of bread from table. Looks longingly at dolls and toys.*]

MAN: If I could take just one little doll to Elsie, how happy she would be! But I mustn't steal anything that we can get along without. But I will take just one piece of candy. This child will not miss it at all. [*Selects with care one piece of candy from the stocking. Then with turkey and bread, starts out of door. Enter MRS. HARDY. Sees man.*]

MRS. HARDY: Hey, there! Come back! What are you doing in my house? [*Seizes his arm. Man allows himself to be drawn back into room.*]

MRS. HARDY: Account for yourself, sir!

MAN: Yes, I was stealing your dinner, ma'am. But, believe me, ma'am; I am not a common thief. I have a wife and a little girl at home, and they have nothing, nothing to eat. I started out this morning to see if I could do some kind of work for someone, to earn food. When I knocked at your door and found no one here, I felt that it was my right to take what I could, rather than risk another refusal and starvation for my wife and little girl.

MRS. HARDY: If you had asked me for something, I should have been glad to help you. But, when I find you stealing, I don't know what I ought to do. [*Enter ALICE with her father. They stop in surprise at sight of MRS. HARDY, and burglar still holding turkey and bread.*]

MRS. HARDY: You disobeyed me, ALICE, and left the kitchen vacant. This man entered and was in the act of carrying off our dinner when I came down.

MAN [*to MR. HARDY*]: Sir, I beg of you to consider the circumstances, before you judge. What if, instead of having for them this good food and these beautiful toys, you had to see your wife and child starving before your eyes! Wouldn't you be tempted to do almost anything to feed them? My little Elsie would cry for joy if

she had a doll like one of these, there; but, you see I did not take one, much as I wanted it. I took only enough to keep them alive. But I give that back. [*Lays stolen things on table.*] I'll promise not to do it again. But, please let me go, that I may try to earn something.

MR. HARDY: Why, my dear man, this is Christmas Day and we want to treat you with Christmas spirit. My wife and I will be glad to share with you our Christmas bounty; and I am sure that ALICE [*with a smile at her*] would like to send your little daughter a Christmas present, to make up for her disobedience which, indirectly, caused you to be tempted.

ALICE: Oh, yes, papa! I'll give her this doll [*holds up articles as she mentions them*], and this book, and this little set of dishes, 'cause I have an old set that I can play with. And I'll give her one of these dress patterns that Aunt Elsie gave me. I don't need it, and I'll tell Aunt Elsie that it was to a girl named Elsie just like her. [*MRS. HARDY meantime has been filling a basket with things to eat, including a generous half of the turkey and plenty of candy. Hands basket to him.*]

MRS. HARDY: Take this to your wife.

MR. HARDY [*taking out pocketbook*]: I am not wealthy, but I can spare this gold piece. I wish you to accept it, with these other things, with my hope that you may soon be in a better position.

MAN: I thank you more than I can say. I will accept it as a loan, and repay you soon as possible. My name is PAUL JEFFERSON and I live at 34 Culler Court. I have been promised a job the first of the new year, so everything will be all right. I thank you for these things, for your spirit of kindness and good will, and, most of all, for saving me from the crime I was about to commit.

MR. and MRS. HARDY: We are glad to help you. We wish you a merry Christmas.

ALICE: A merry Christmas to Elsie!

MR. JEFFERSON: Our Christmas will indeed be merry, thanks to you. Thank you! Thank you! [*Exit with things.*]

CURTAIN

PLAYING SANTA CLAUS

Boy should be lying ill upon the floor with an old coverlet upon him, his father sitting beside him—a larger boy in long trousers and old shirt, hair powdered to look gray.

OLD MAN [*in mournful tone*]:

I'm out of work, I'm down and out;
My mind is filled with fear and doubt.
I've had no work for many a day,
Nor earned a cent in any way.
I all my furniture have sold,
My coat that sheltered from the cold;
I have forgot' the taste of food.
I used to think a Power for good
Helped those who did their very best;
But now I think that was a jest,
Made to amuse the rich, and so
To ridicule the poor and low.
And now my boy's sick unto death.
I fear he'll soon draw his last breath.
I've sent word to those charity folks—
Perhaps those offers are all jokes—
I've told them how it was with me,
But I've small hope that there can be
A man on earth that's good enough

To help a man with luck that's tough,
To send a doctor to my son,
And help to heal my little one.
But, still, they say, 'tis Christmas time,
And in the church the bells do chime;
At Christmas time it may be true
That poor people can be blessed too.

[*A knock is heard.*]

OLD MAN [*more spiritedly*]:

A knock! a knock! oh, may it be
That help at Christmas comes to me?

Enter DOCTOR—boy in long coat, high hat, carrying satchel

DOCTOR:

Good evening to you, my poor man,
So Christmas has come 'round again!
They tell me that you and your boy
Have not been having Christmas joy.
But soon he will forget the pain,
For I shall make him well again.
Let's see what all the trouble is!
I'll look at that small tongue of his.

[*Sick boy sticks out his tongue.*]

DOCTOR:

Ah, yes! it is as I had thought,
That poverty has on him brought
The illness that will come to all
On whom want and starvation fall.
What your son needs, my dear, good man,
Is to eat as much as he can,
To eat good food, and wear warm clothes.
Such care of him will mend your woes.

OLD MAN:

But, DOCTOR, we have no such things!—
Might as well ask for diamond rings.
I have no food, and can get none;
Oh, save for me my little son!

DOCTOR:

Here's just the chance for little JACK!
He'll give you everything you lack.
JACK is my little boy, who says,
"I wish I could be Santa Claus."
He can play "Santa Claus" and bring
You what you need, just everything—
Something to eat, something to wear,
A nurse to give your son good care.
In a few minutes I'll be back
With a "Santa Claus" made out of JACK.

[*Exit* DOCTOR.]

OLD MAN:

In those old days when I was young
I used to hear sweet carols sung,
That told us that on Christmas Eve
No one should be allowed to grieve.
But since my wife has passed away,
I have not had one happy day.
I guess my little Billy here
Has never had real Christmas cheer.
But am I dreaming, or is it so,
That DOCTOR was here a minute ago?

ANOTHER knock is heard. OLD MAN rises and opens the door. Enter the DOCTOR with JACK, carrying two big baskets, one of clothing and one of food. They are followed by a little girl in blue dress and white cap and apron of a nurse.

JACK:

We bring some Christmas gifts to you,
And add to them our greeting, too.

THE nurse begins to arrange the pillow of Billy and holds in view a little bottle of medicine.

DOCTOR:

The little maiden over there
Will give your son the best of care;
About good nursing she's been taught,
The proper medicine she's brought.
And I've found a job for you, my man,
You'll earn some money now again.

JACK:

And now we'll leave you to yourselves.
Unpack your food and fill your shelves.

OLD MAN:

I can not thank you, sir, tonight,
But know that you have brought the light
Of Christmas to a man who thought
That Christmas was the rich man's lot,
And that the poor man nothing had
To do with anything so glad.

DOCTOR:

We want no thanks this holy night.
We have but tried to do the right,—
To celebrate this season dear
By spreading bounteous good cheer.
But now our other duties call—

JACK and DOCTOR: /

A Happy Christmas to you all!

A DOUBLE CHRISTMAS GIFT

FOR THREE OLDER GIRLS, TWO SMALL GIRLS, TWO LARGER BOYS, AND ONE SMALL BOY

SCENE: Reception room of orphan asylum

THE ringing of a bell is heard. Enter MAIDSERVANT. She opens door. Enter well-dressed woman, MRS. ALLAN NORTON.

MRS. NORTON: Is the MATRON in?

SERVANT: Yes, ma'am. [*Takes card and leaves room.*
Enter MATRON.]

MRS. NORTON: I have come to see about adopting a child. I want it as a surprise to my husband for Christmas. It would delight him more than anything else in the world.

MATRON [*in business-like manner*]: Boy or girl, and what age?

MRS. NORTON: Well, I had not decided exactly. It does not make much difference, just so it is a bright and attractive child.

MATRON: I'll have the children come in one by one, so that you may choose for yourself.

MRS. NORTON: Very well.

EXIT MATRON to arrange for interview. Enter MATRON leading by the hand a pretty little girl.

MATRON: This is one of the most attractive children we have in the Home. Her father is living; but is so drunken most of the time, and often so cruel to her, that the humane authorities have put her here.

MRS. NORTON: Yes, she is pretty. But, oh! I want a real orphan. Why, her father might decide to claim her just as we were becoming attached to her.

MATRON: You could arrange to adopt her so that he could not do that.

MRS. NORTON: Yes, of course. But I do not like the idea. She would not seem like my own child at all if I knew all the time that she had a drunken father living. No. Let me see some of the others, please.

MATRON [*to child*]: All right, RUTH, you may go now. Tell HENRY to come in, will you, please?

EXIT RUTH. After a few seconds, enter sharp-looking boy, about ten years of age.

MRS. NORTON [*to MATRON*]: Now, he looks bright. What did you say his name is?

MATRON: HENRY MORGAN.

MRS. NORTON [*to HENRY*]: Do you like to live here, HENRY?

HENRY: Yes, ma'am.

MRS. NORTON: How would you like to live with me?

HENRY: I don't know, ma'am. What'll you gimme for Christmas if I do, ma'am?

MATRON [*in reprimanding tone*]: HENRY!

HENRY: Yes, ma'am.

MATRON: You must not speak to the lady in that way, HENRY.

MRS. NORTON [*to MATRON*]: Don't tell him that, please. I want him to be natural. [*To HENRY.*] What would you want me to give you?

HENRY: Are you rich?

MRS. NORTON: I have plenty of money. If a nice little boy lived with me, I should make him very happy.

HENRY: I'm not a nice little boy. I guess you don't want me. [*To MATRON.*] May I go now?

MRS. NORTON: Yes, let him go. He is contented here, and does not seem to care for me at all. I should like to have a boy who needed me, whom I could help.

MATRON [*to HENRY*]: You may go, then, HENRY. Tell WILLIAM to come here. [*To MRS. NORTON.*] He needs someone to take an interest in him.

HENRY: Yes, ma'am.

EXIT HENRY. Enter thin, ill-looking boy, very unattractive.

MATRON: This is WILLIAM SMITH. [*To WILLIAM.*] WILLIAM, tell this lady how old you are.

WILLIAM [*dully, without expression*]: I'm twelve goin' on thirteen.

MRS. NORTON: What do you like to do, Christmas, WILLIAM? Do you like to have a tree, and to hang up your stocking?

WILLIAM: Naw, I don't care nothin' about that. It's silly.

MRS. NORTON: What do you like to do, WILLIAM?

WILLIAM: Nothin' much.

MRS. NORTON: But what do you like to play?

WILLIAM: I don't play much. HENRY MORGAN gen'ally torments me when I'm with the boys, so I don't play with 'em.

MRS. NORTON: Do you like to read?

WILLIAM: No'm.

MRS. NORTON: What kind of work do you do?

WILLIAM: I never work no more'n I have to. I don't like to work.

MRS. NORTON [*to MATRON*]: Madam, he is impossible. I want a child that I can love and cherish as my own. Perhaps I shall have to give up my idea.

Enter abruptly a good-looking little boy, crying at the top of his voice. He stops at sight of strange woman.

MATRON: What's the matter, BENNY?

BENNY [*beginning to wail afresh*]: Oh, JINNY's gone! She's lost or tramped on or something. She never goes away without telling me. I've looked every place and I can't find her! [*Cries aloud.*]

MATRON: Now look here, BENNY. JINNY's all right and having a good time this afternoon. Bridget took her down town with her. She'll be back any time now.

BENNY [*doubtfully*]: Are you sure? She didn't tell me.

MATRON: She didn't have time to tell you, BENNY, after I decided to let her go. Why, there she comes now.

ENTER from outside, beautiful little girl with SERVANT. SERVANT passes on through another door. Little girl stops and BENNY runs to her. They stand in background, talking in low tones together.

MRS. NORTON [*who has been watching BENNY with eager eyes*]: Oh, madam! You must let me have that little boy. Why did you not let me see him before?

MATRON [*hesitatingly*]: Really, Mrs. Norton, I want you to be pleased, and you are at liberty to take any of the children but if you could see how devoted to each other this brother and sister are, you would realize that it would be cruel to separate them. I—

MRS. NORTON: But, my dear madam, can I not take both? I told you it made no difference about that, and they are so adorable. My husband would be delighted. Oh, do not refuse me.

MATRON: Why, of course, if you would take both, we should be delighted. Their interest is ours, and it would be best for them, I am sure. They are not the kind of children that are ordinarily found in an orphan asylum. Many people have wanted to adopt one or the other, but no one wanted two; and it was plainly too cruel to separate them.

MRS. NORTON: It seems so strange. The little boy is the image of my husband, and the girl of his sister—oh, madam, can you tell me how they came here?

MATRON: It was after that terrible railroad accident several years ago. No one claimed them, so it was supposed that their parents were killed and that they had no relatives. We could never find out what their name was. The locket around the little girl's neck was engraved with "VIRGINIA," so we called her that. There was a "B" embroidered on the little boy's coat. We thought perhaps it stood for BENJAMIN.

MRS. NORTON: BENNETT! BENNETT and VIRGINIA SHERMAN! They are my husband's own nephew and niece. They must be! They must be!

MATRON: Is it really true, MRS. NORTON? I have so often wished that those lovely children might be reared by some of their own family.

MRS. NORTON: My husband and I were abroad at the time of that accident. He was studying in Germany. It was reported to us that the whole family was killed, and we believed the report. The children's mother was his only sister, and he was devoted to her. Oh, this discovery is wonderful. This is surely a happy, happy Christmas time. Oh, I wonder if they will want to come with me.

MATRON: Come here, children, and talk to this lady.

MRS. NORTON: VIRGINIA, would you like to come and live with your own uncle and aunt? We'll make this the happiest Christmas you have ever had.

LITTLE GIRL: Maybe I'd like it, but I'd rather stay with BENNY.

MRS. NORTON: And BENNY, would you like it, too?

BENNY: We'd like it if both of us could come. 'Cause JINNY and I just has to be together.

MRS. NORTON: Then you shall both come and be my little children. Your uncle will be your Christmas present, and you will be his.

AUNT HEPSY'S CHRISTMAS STOCKING

CHARACTERS

MRS. DENTON, known as AUNT HEPSY

ANNA	} Her nieces and nephews	JANE, the maid
PHIL		GRIM, a servant
LOIS		SMILES, a newsboy
NEWTON		MRS. BARLOW

STAGE ARRANGEMENT

SET the back of the stage to represent a pleasant living room. In front of this have a curtain about four feet from the front of stage, to give space for the street scene between this curtain and the one at front of stage.

SCENE I—Living room in the DENTON home

Discovered, NEWTON, PHIL, LOIS and Anna

NEWTON: Say, isn't it jolly to be here for Christmas? It seems like old times for us to be together here.

LOIS: It surely was lovely in AUNT HEPSY to ask us all here.

PHIL: Won't it be fun for us to be together Christmas day? It will be the first time for—let's see—four years.

ANNA: How time flies. It doesn't seem four years since we were all here for Christmas and made the cook cross because we ate up her cookies so fast.

NEWTON: And PHIL dressed like a ghost to scare you girls and fell down stairs and scared himself most to death. [*All laugh.*]

PHIL: I thought I had broken every bone in my body and I was quite disgusted when AUNT HEPSY insisted I wasn't injured at all.

LOIS: Say, now, folks, we've got to talk about Christmas presents. What we're going to give and—

PHIL: I'm going to give ANNA a nice little doll and—

ANNA [*to PHIL*]: I shall give you a pretty red horn to make toot-toot music with.

LOIS: Don't be foolish. Let's decide first whether we shall have a tree or hang up our stockings.

NEWTON: I'm tired of Christmas trees. I think it will be more fun to hang up our stockings.

ANNA: I think so too. We can sit around the fire early Christmas morning and pull the presents out the way we used to years ago.

PHIL: I think that will be lots of fun. We'll guess what's in each package before we open it. I vote for the stockings

LOIS: So do I. I wonder if AUNT HEPSY will like the present we have for her.

NEWTON: Of course she will. The picture is fine, I think.

PHIL: I think it was a clever idea for us to have that large picture made from the photograph she has of her little boy.

ANNA: Oh, say, let's make a large stocking to hang up for AUNT HEPSY and put the picture in it.

NEWTON: Just the thing. How long is the picture?

LOIS: About three feet with the frame.

PHIL: Then we'll make a great big stocking and hang the picture inside of it. That's the cleverest idea yet.

ANNA: I've got to go to the stores this morning and I'll get the cloth.

NEWTON: I've got to get some things so I'll go with you and advise you what to select.

ANNA: Would you suggest percale or cheviot or—

PHIL: Good land, ANN, he doesn't know whether you're talking about cloth or—a—breakfast food.

ANNA: Of course he doesn't, but I'll be glad to have him along. I'll get ready. [*Exit.*]

NEWTON: Well, I'll have to go powder my nose if I'm going with ANNA. Farewell and au revoir. [*Goes out jauntily.*]

PHIL: Guess I'll see if I can do anything for AUNT HEPSY. [*Exit.*]

LOIS: I must do up some presents to send home. What a merry, thrilling time Christmas is. I just love it. [*Rises; voices are heard off stage.*]

JANE [*off stage*]: Oh, is that so? I'll let you know I don't care what you think, and I wouldn't think for a minute of giving you a Christmas present, so.

Enter JANE

LOIS: What's the matter, JANE?

JANE: Oh, it's that smart, stuck-up, big-headed, conceited GRIM. He ain't a bit nice looking an' I don't like 'im a-tall. He needn't to think I'll give the like of him a Christmas present.

LOIS: Of course you don't think anything of GRIM, JANE. He's not nice looking enough for a girl like you.

JANE: Oh, I don't know—he's not so bad lookin'. GRIM ain't.

LOIS: And he's way to old for you. His hair will soon be falling out.

JANE: That's no such a thing. He's not old a-tall—but I'll not give 'im a Christmas present.

LOIS: Of course you won't; that would be foolish. [*Exit.*]

JANE [*looking after her crossly*]: I don't see why she says that. I guess I can give 'im a Christmas present if I want to an' no harm done. Some folks make me tired. I wonder if he'd like a—fine silk necktie. He'd look nice in brown an' yellow, GRIM would.

Enter GRIM

GRIM: If there was only a piece o' mistletoe fastened up to the ceilin' I'd think you was standin' here waitin' for a kiss, MISS JANE.

JANE: Now don't you be thinkin', GRIM, that I'm carin' 'bout any kisses, an' as for you, I wouldn't kiss you, not for anything.

GRIM: An' as for you, MISS JANE, why should I kiss you when they's a nice-lookin' girl I know that's glad to git 'em. You ought to see, just once, how fine lookin' she is.

JANE [*tossing her head*]: Then the two of you must make a pair that'd break the lookin'-glass. [*Goes out.*]

GRIM: She needn't think I'll waste any money on a Chris'mus present for 'er—she thinks herself too smart. [*Walks across floor thinking.*] I wonder how she'd like a—a bracelet for Chris'mus. Would she like that better'n a long string o' beads, say fancy red ones? [*Goes out.*]

Enter MRS. DENTON

MRS. DENTON: I'm glad to have the young people here for Christmas. They bring life to the house and help me forget the loneliness of the holidays. [*Sighs.*] Christmas is never merry for me since I lost my little boy. How different it would be if he were here. Instead of being sad I better go see if JANE is getting on well with the Christmas work. [*Starts over.*]

Enter JANE

JANE: MIS' BARLOW is here ma'am, an' wants to see you.

MRS. DENTON: Send her in here, please. [*Exit* JANE.]

Enter MRS. BARLOW

MRS. BARLOW: I'm sorry to trouble you, MRS. DENTON, when I know you are busy, but I came on a matter of—well, sort of business. I am on the Civic Christmas Committee and we are trying to find a number of people

who will take poor children into their homes for the day and give them a merry Christmas. I wondered if you wouldn't take one or two little folks and make them happy—it's just for one day, you know

MRS. DENTON: Oh, no! No, indeed! I wouldn't think of it. I can't stand it to have a child in the house since I lost my little boy. I am sorry to refuse, but I can't do it, MRS. BARLOW.

MRS. BARLOW: I don't want to urge you, but it seems to me that if you once had children in your home you would get over this feeling and enjoy the little folks. They might be a pleasure to you.

MRS. DENTON: No, I just can't think of it. I have some of my nieces and nephews with me this Christmas and I don't want anyone else.

MRS. BARLOW: All right. I'll hurry along for I want to make a number of calls. I hope you have a Merry Christmas. [*Exit.*]

MRS. DENTON: She will think I'm hard but I can't help it. [*Exit.*]

CURTAIN

NOTE—This is the inner curtain to conceal room at back and allow for the street scene.

SCENE II—On the street

Enter NEWTON and ANNA, wearing wraps and carrying packages

NEWTON: I wonder if we have everything we needed to get. [*They pause.*]

ANNA: No, of course not, but we'll not think of what we've forgotten until we get home. Oh, here comes a little boy crying.

NEWTON: I wonder what's the matter with him. Seems to feel pretty bad.

Enter SMILES, from opposite side

ANNA: What's the matter, little boy? Did you get hurt?

[SMILES *stops and cries.*]

NEWTON: Anything we can do for you?

ANNA: Tell us what your name is.

SMILES: It—it's—SMILES. [*Sobs.*]

NEWTON: SMILES? Well, you don't look much like your name.

SMILES: I guess you wouldn't smile neither if you didn't have no place to stay Chris'mus an' nobody to give you no presents an' good Chris'mus dinner ner nuthin'. [*Rubs eyes.*]

ANNA: Where do you live?

SMILES: Don't live nowheres. Ain't got no place to live. I been stayin' with ol' Mis' Martin but she's got sick an' they've took 'er off an' I ain't got nobody to stay with.

ANNA: You poor little fellow. [*Aside to NEWTON.*] He's a dear child and nice looking. How I wish we could—

NEWTON: But we can't. AUNT HEPSY wouldn't—

ANNA: No, she wouldn't have him in the house.

SMILES [*taking NEWTON's hand*]: I wish you'd take me home with you.

NEWTON: I wish I could, SMILES.

SMILES: I'll be awful good, honest I will.

NEWTON [*aside to ANNA*]: I can't stand this. Let's take him with us. GRIM can keep him upstairs and AUNT HEPSY needn't know he's there.

ANNA: Oh, we don't dare.

NEWTON: We'll just keep him till I can find a place for him. We can give him some Christmas presents and a good feed.

ANNA: I'm afraid of AUNT HEPSY.

NEWTON: I'm not. What she doesn't know won't hurt her—or us. [*To SMILES.*] Come on, SMILES, we'll take you along with us but you'll have to do just as we tell you.

SMILES [*happily*]: Say, if I don't, you kin beat me wid a stick o' wood, honest.

ANNA [*to NEWTON*]: We'll take him in the back door.

NEWTON: Yes, and hide him upstairs. Don't worry.

ANNA: I'll borrow a suit of clothes from Mrs. Dean, next door, who has several boys, and dress him up.

[*They exeunt with SMILES.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE III—The DENTON living room

Discovered, JANE, dusting room

JANE: That GRIM just makes me tired, he does. He thinks he's the whole thing, the homely, goggle-eyed smarty. I could go with a lot of better fellows than he is, any day. Tim Kelly, the policeman, thinks I'm all right an' he's better lookin', too. [*Stops dusting and thinks.*] I guess I'll go to the movies with Tim tonight if he wants me to.

Enter LOIS

LOIS [*teasingly*]: Well, JANE, have you bought a present for GRIM yet? Maybe you're making him a pair of slippers on the sly.

JANE [*scornfully*]: Now, then, Miss LOIS, don't you be thinkin' I'll give that brazen-faced, rattle-brained GRIM a Christmas present. I can go with better fellows than him.

LOIS: Of course you can. He's no earthly good.

JANE [*flaring up*]: I don't know why you need to say that, Miss. He's not a bad sort a-tall, GRIM ain't. Some folks would call 'im real han'some.

LOIS [*laughing*]: There, I knew you were planning to give him a Christmas present. What is it to be?

JANE: I guess I've got better sense than to spend my money on presents for him. [*Tosses head.*]

LOIS: That's right, save your money. [*Goes out laughing.*]

JANE [*meditating*]: Slippers, she said. I wonder now how he'd like a nice pair to put on at night when his feet's tired out. Guess I'll git 'im some.

Enter GRIM

GRIM: Well, now, MISS JANE, what feller are you standin' here a-dreamin' 'bout? I should think you'd be busy, what with Chris'mus most here.

JANE [*dusting rapidly*]: I guess it's nothin' to you, GRIM, who I'm dreamin' 'bout so long's it ain't you. So, now.

GRIM: I'll say you better not dream 'bout me 'cause my girl that I'm smilin' on won't like it. What you 'spose she'd like to have me give 'er for Chris'mus?

JANE [*loftily*]: I don't care what presents you buy so you don't give none to me.

GRIM [*very surprised*]: Say, now, you don't think I'd give you no present, do you? [*JANE makes a face at him and goes off. He stands looking after her.*] Say, now, she's some girl, JANE is. I wonder if she'd rather have a nice gold pin than a bracelet. I guess I'll git 'er a swell pin. [*Exit.*]

Enter ANNA and NEWTON

ANNA: I'm so nervous I don't know what to do.

NEWTON: I feel sort of on needles and pins myself. [*Walks floor.*]

. *Enter LOIS and PHIL*

PHIL: What's the matter NEWT? You act—sort of queer.

LOIS: ANNA, you look half sick. What's the matter?

ANNA: Something— [*looks around cautiously*] dreadful.

PHIL: Tell us, this minute.

ANNA: Well, we found a poor newsboy on the street, crying because he didn't have any place to go.

NEWTON: The little shaver begged us to let him come with us so we—

LOIS: Oh, you didn't bring him here?

ANNA: Yes, we've got him upstairs.

PHIL: Say, if AUNT HEPSY finds it out she'll—

LOIS: I guess she *will*.

PHIL: We'll have to see that she doesn't know he's here. Can't we find some place to send him.

NEWTON [*firmly*]: He's going to stay here until after Christmas so as to get some presents and a good feed.

PHIL: All right; we'll try to keep him dark.

LOIS: Now we must all go work on the big stocking for AUNT HEPSY.

ANNA: Yes, and make popcorn balls and do forty other things. [*All exeunt.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE IV—Living room Christmas eve

Discovered, MRS. DENTON [Dim light on stage] .

MRS. DENTON [*sitting musing sadly*]: Christmas eve is such a sad time. I shall be glad when tomorrow is over. [SMILES sticks his head in and stands listening.]

MRS. DENTON: It reminds me so forcibly of my little boy who died at Christmas time. How I wish he could be here tonight. Oh, to have him with me. [*Wipes eyes.*] What is better than a nice boy? Why did I have to lose mine? I'll go look at his picture; perhaps that will comfort me. [SMILES *quickly darts away. She goes off opposite side.*]

Enter LOIS, ANNA, PHIL and NEWTON

PHIL: Now we must get the big stocking up, ready for the picture we have for AUNT HESY.

LOIS: I'm sure it will look fine on the wall.

ANNA: Which, the picture or the big stocking?

LOIS [*laughing*]: I was thinking of the stocking, but of course the picture will look fine. [*They fasten the stocking, which should be long enough to hide SMILES when he gets in it, to the wall.*]

NEWTON: This is splendid.

PHIL: Won't it surprise AUNT HESY?

ANNA: Let's go finish making the candy. We won't put the picture in it until we're sure AUNT HESY is in bed. [*All exeunt.*]

Enter SMILES

SMILES [*looking about cautiously*]: Oh, jimminy, see the big stockin'! I bet that's for the nice lady that wants a little boy. She said she'd like to have one in the house. I know what I'm goin' ter do. I'm goin' to git in this stockin' an' be 'er Chris'mus present. Them folks told me I was to stay upstairs all the while, but

jimminy, I gits tired settin' up there all the while. It don't matter if I walk 'round long's I don't hurt nuthin'. [*Looks around the room.*] Now I'll git in the stockin' so's the nice lady'll find me. [*There should be a slit at the back of the stocking so SMILES can slip into it and stand.*]

Enter MRS. DENTON

MRS. DENTON [*looking in surprise*]: Mercy! What an immense stocking. This is some of LOIS and ANNA's work. I wonder if it is meant for me? What can they have for me that takes a stocking like this? [*Looks at stocking.*] There's something in it. Oh, oh, it's alive! I saw it move. [*Moves back quickly.*] But surely I don't need to be afraid of it. I'll see what's in it. [*She goes over to the stocking and looks in the top.*] Oh, oh! [*Screams.*] A child! [*Sits and covers face with hands.*]

Enter LOIS, ANNA, PHIL and NEWTON

PHIL: What is it?

ANNA: What's the matter, AUNT HEPSEY?

MRS. DENTON: How—how *dare* you?

LOIS: Dare what, AUNT HEPSEY?

MRS. DENTON: Put that in the stocking. How *DARE* you?

NEWTON [*looking in stocking*]: Well—I'll—be—blessed!

SMILES [*peeking over the top of stocking*]: I'm a Chris'-mus present for the nice lady. She said she wants a little boy. I'm goin' to be 'er boy now.

NEWTON: The idea of you coming here.

ANNA: Let's get him away quick. [*NEWTON and PHIL lift SMILES out of the top of the stocking.*]

NEWTON: Now you come on.

SMILES: I'm the lady's Chris'-mus present. [*Throws himself on the floor by MRS. DENTON and cries.*] I won't go.

MRS. DENTON: Where did he come from?

ANNA: We found him on the street crying because he had no place to stay. We felt so sorry we brought him here.

NEWTON: But we'll get rid of him right away.

SMILES: I won't go. I'm the lady's present.

MRS. DENTON: Stand up so I can see you. [SMILES *gets up and stands by her smiling pathetically.*]

SMILES: Won't you have me fer a Chris'mus present? I wants a nice ma.

PHIL: We'll take him away, AUNT HEPSY.

MRS. DENTON: You'll do nothing of the kind. If he wants to stay with me he shall.

SMILES [*taker her hand*]: Oh, jimminy! Now I got a home an' a nice ma. Merry Chris'mus. [MRS. DENTON *smiles at him; the others smile at each other.*]

CURTAIN

GRANDFATHER'S BRIGHT CHRISTMAS PLAN

CHARACTERS

GRANDFATHER DALE

MRS. WEST, his daughter

ADA

VERA

CORA

} His grand-daughters

MR. PARKER, a lawyer

MRS. JONES, a neighbor

SCENE—MRS. WEST'S living room

Discovered, MRS. WEST and the three girls

MRS. WEST: Now girls, since GRANDFATHER has decided to make us a visit I hope you will be very kind and pleasant to him. I want him to think a great deal of you.

ADA: Oh, dear, what a bother to have him come now.

CORA: When we are so busy with Christmas parties and entertainments.

VERA: And so much to do getting our presents finished.

MRS. WEST: I'm very busy too; what with getting ready for Christmas and doing all my public work I'm rushed to death, but we must not neglect GRANDFATHER. We must make him feel we are glad to have him here.

ADA: Yes, of course.

CORA: We'll try to give him a little time.

VERA: But it will be a dreadful bother when we're so busy.

MRS. WEST: He may be here any time now. [*Exit.*]

ADA: I must go finish that lovely breakfast cap I'm making for Dorothy. It's going to be a dream. I'd like to keep it for myself it's so becoming.

CORA: Well, I've got to go to the church and practice for the entertainment. Our tableau is going to be fine.

VERA: I've got to go over to Bessie's and help string popcorn.

Enter MRS. WEST and GRANDFATHER DALE

MRS. WEST: It is splendid that you could make us this visit. Here are the girls. You'll hardly know them, they've grown so. [*The girls stand about him and shake hands.*]

ADA: We're very glad to see you, GRANDPA dear.

CORA: You're looking just fine.

VERA: We hope you'll have a dandy visit with us.

GRANDFATHER: Well, well, you're a pretty fine bunch of gran'-daughters. If you're just as good as you look, you're all right. It's so long since I saw you I'll have to get acquainted with you again.

ADA: Oh, we're not very good looking.

CORA: And we're not so very well behaved.

VERA: But we hope you'll like us anyway, GRANDFATHER.

MRS. WEST [*pulls easy chair forward*]: You sit down and rest, father, while I see about some lunch for you. [*He sits; exit MRS. WEST.*]

ADA: I hope you had a nice trip. I just love to travel on the cars, but it gets tiresome. Now I hope you'll excuse me, GRANDFATHER, but I've just *got* to finish a Christmas present for one of the girls. [*Exit.*]

CORA: It's surely good to have you here, GRANDFATHER. I hope you can stay a long time. Now, you won't mind if I run off, will you? I've got to go to the church and practice for the entertainment. [*Exit.*]

VERA: This is a dreadfully busy time. I've got to go and string popcorn for the Christmas tree; but I know you'd like to rest awhile, so you won't mind, will you GRANDFATHER? Mother will be in right away to visit with you. [*Hurries off.*]

GRANDFATHER: Humph! They must be dreadful busy when they don't have five minutes time to visit with me. One of 'em seems as selfish as the other. I guess it's a good idea I fixed up that Christmas plan of mine. That'll show me which is the best one of 'em.

Enter MRS. WEST

MRS. WEST: I've got lunch fixed for you, father. I think it's a good plan to have something to eat after one has been traveling. You come out and eat, then one of our neighbors is coming over to visit with you. He's a very nice old man. I've got to go to the hall to a meeting of the Christmas Committee of the Women's Club. I hate to run off but you won't mind when you have a caller.

GRANDFATHER: All right, I'll come. [*Exit* MRS. WEST.]
Well, MARTHA seems as bad as the girls. I should think she could stay home when I first get here. I don't like this but I'll keep still and see how things go. [*Exit.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE II—Room as before

Discovered, GRANDFATHER, walking floor

GRANDFATHER: Things don't get any better. Every one of 'em's so busy they don't have time to look at me hardly. I'd have stayed home if I'd known it was goin' to be this way. I'm glad I fixed up my Chris'mas plan. I bought a dressing gown that's too long for me; sleeves come down over my hands and it comes clear to the floor. I'm going to ask one of the girls to cut it off an' hem it up for me. Then I brought a pair of old socks that's full o' holes; I'll ask one of 'em to mend 'em for me. The other one I'll ask to make me a flannel bag to put my water bottle in. This is my plan: I'm going to ask 'em to do these things an' the one that does her work the best, without making a fuss over it, I'll give a fine pair of gold beads that belonged to their gran'ma, for a Chris'mas present. They'll all three want 'em and this is a good way to find out which one deserves 'em. [*Sits.*]

Enter ADA

ADA: How are you getting along, GRANDPA dear? I'm so busy I don't see much of you.

GRANDFATHER: No, you don't. There's something I want you to do for me, ADA. It won't take very long and I know you'll be glad to do it for your GRAN'PA, won't you?

ADA [*hesitatingly*]: Of course—if I can.

GRANDFATHER: I bought me a new dressing gown and the sleeves are so long they come down on my hands an' the skirt comes most to the floor. I want it right away, to wear, want it before Chris'mas, an' I'd like to have you cut it off an' hem it up round the bottom and the sleeves. You'll do this for your GRAN'PA, won't you?

ADA: Oh, I'm just awfully busy.

GRANDFATHER: But this won't take long.

ADA: It seems to me it would take a long time to do all that sewing. I've got some presents I just *have* to finish, and we're practicing, you know, and I'm getting ready for the party Christmas eve. I don't see how I *can* do it, GRANDFATHER.

GRANDFATHER: Well, if you can't I 'spose you can't.

ADA: I'm dreadfully sorry, but you see how it is.

GRANDFATHER: Yes, I understand.

ADA: Mercy, I must rush or I'll be late for the practice.
[*Rushes off.*]

GRANDFATHER [*grimly*]: There's one young lady won't get her gran'mother's gold beads.

Enter CORA

CORA: I hope you're having a good time, GRANDFATHER. I'm so busy I don't get to see much of you.

GRANDFATHER: No, you don't. There's something I want you to do for me, CORA. It won't take long and you'll be glad to help me, won't you?

CORA [*hesitatingly*]: Of course—if I can.

GRANDFATHER: I bought me a new dressing gown and the sleeves are so long they come down on my hands, an' the skirt comes most to the floor. I want it right away to wear, want it before Christmas, an' I'd like to have you cut it off an' hem it up round the bottom and the sleeves. You'll do this for your GRAN'PA, won't you?

CORA: I'd love to, but—I'm dreadfully busy.

GRANDFATHER: But this won't take long.

CORA: Oh, it would take me a long while to do all that sewing, I've got such a lot to do now before Christmas that it makes me tired to think of it. You don't *know* how busy I am, GRANDPA.

GRANDFATHER: Well, if you can't I 'spose you can't.

CORA: I'm frightfully sorry, but you understand, don't you?

GRANDFATHER: Yes, I understand.

CORA: I've got to go this minute. We're going down to look at a present for Miss Evans. [*Hurries out.*]

GRANDFATHER: There goes another girl who won't get her gran'mother's gold beads.

Enter VERA

VERA: How you getting along, GRANDFATHER? I don't get a chance to see much of you.

GRANDFATHER: So I notice. There's something I want you to do for me, VERA. It won't take long and you'll be glad to help me, won't you?

VERA [*hesitates*]: Well—if I can.

GRANDFATHER: I bought me a new dressing gown, and the sleeves are so long they come down on my hands, an' the skirt comes most to the floor. I want it right away, want it before Christmas, an' I'd like to have you cut it off an' hem it up round the bottom an' the sleeves. You'll do this for your GRAN'FATHER, won't you?

VERA: Of course I would if I wasn't so busy but—

GRANDFATHER: This won't take long.

VERA: Seems to me that's a lot of work, to hem a dressing gown up round the bottom an' round the sleeves. I've got my presents to finish and wrap, and with all the extra things, getting ready for Christmas an' the program, really I don't see how I *can* do your gown, GRANDPA.

GRANDFATHER: Well, if you can't, you can't.

VERA: I'd do it in a minute if it were any other time but just before Christmas. You won't mind, will you?

GRANDFATHER: No, that won't help any.

VERA: Dear me, why do I stand here talking when I've got to go over to the dressmaker's this minute. She's fixing my dress for the Christmas party. [*Hurries out.*]

GRANDFATHER: There's one more girl who won't get her gran'mother's gold beads for a Chris'mas present. [*Sighs.*]

Enter MRS. JONES

MRS. JONES: Good afternoon, MR. DALE. [*Sits.*] I thought I'd come over and visit with you a few minutes because I knew MRS. WEST had to go out on Christmas work. I suppose you don't see much of her and the girls. They're dreadfully busy; they always are, but now they have more than ever on their minds because of Chris'mas.

GRANDFATHER: They're gone most of the time. I don't have any visits with 'em. Might as well have stayed home.

MRS. JONES: Oh, you mus'n't say that. Christmas is a very merry time, isn't it?

GRANDFATHER: Humph! I don't see as it's very merry here with the folks gone all the while. Say, do you know where there's a lawyer?

MRS. JONES: LAWYER PARKER has his office near here.

GRANDFATHER: Wish you'd telephone for him to come over here.

MRS. JONES: My sakes, that sounds serious to send for a lawyer, but I'll see if he can come. [*Exit.*]

GRANDFATHER: I'm going to fix those girls so they'll be sorry they didn't have a few minutes to spend on their GRANDFATHER.

Enter MRS. JONES

MRS. JONES: He'll be over right away. I hope you're not going to do anything you'll be sorry for. You know it's sort of risky to deal with the law. I had an uncle once who fooled with law till he got rid of all he had.

GRANDFATHER: You needn't worry 'bout me.

MRS. JONES: Here he comes. I'll have to go as soon as he gets here. [*She goes over and admits the caller.*]

Enter LAWYER PARKER

PARKER: Are you the gentleman who wished to consult a lawyer?

GRANDFATHER: I am. Be seated, sir. [*PARKER sits.*] I had a little piece of work for each of my three grand-daughters to do. The first refused to do hers, so I offered the same work to the second; she refused and I offered it to the third. Not one of them will do this for me, so instead of giving them a Christmas present, I'm going to punish them.

PARKER: Now, sir, don't do anything hard at Christmas time.

GRANDFATHER: I want you to draw up a paper giving each of these grand-daughters one dollar each and the rest of what I have left them in my will goes to the S. P. C. A. in Boston.

PARKER: But, sir, have you considered this matter thoroughly? Your grand-daughters are very fine girls and—

GRANDFATHER: I want you to go to your office and fix up a paper the way I've told you and let me see it.

PARKER: Certainly, I will, but you know Christmas is a time of good will and giving—not of taking away. Perhaps if you'd wait a few days you might change your mind.

GRANDFATHER: Have this paper fixed up for me to see by tomorrow, sir. That's all. Good-day, sir. [*Exit* PARKER.]

GRANDFATHER: I'll show 'em I will.

CURTAIN

SCENE III—Room as before

Enter ADA

ADA: I hurried home as soon as I could so's to do that work for GRANDFATHER. It's a shame not to do that much for him when he's such a dear. I can sew it on the machine and it won't take long. I'll run up and do it now while he's over visiting MRS. JONES. [*Exit.*]

Enter MRS. WEST

MRS. WEST: We've all been so busy lately that we've just neglected poor father. Now this evening I'm going to keep the girls home and we'll have a nice visit together.

Enter CORA

CORA: Dear me, I'm tired. I hurried home before the committee meeting was over because there was some work I wanted to do.

MRS. WEST: Well, get it done so we can have a visit with GRANDFATHER. If we don't look out he'll think we are neglecting him.

Enter ADA

CORA: All right, I think we better. [*Exit* CORA and MRS. WEST.]

ADA: I fixed GRANDPA'S dressing gown, shortened the sleeves and cut it off around the bottom and hemmed it. I feel lots better since I got it done. [*Exit.*]

Enter GRANDFATHER

GRANDFATHER: I stopped at that lawyer's but he had been called out of town and hasn't done a thing about fixing that paper. I'll not fool with him very long; I'll get somebody else to write it. [*Sits.*]

Enter MRS. WEST

MRS. WEST: Now, father, I want you to rest.

GRANDFATHER: Rest? Huh! I haven't done anything but rest since I got here.

MRS. WEST: But I want you to rest now so we can have a good visit this evening. We're all going to stay home and have a good time.

Enter ADA and VERA

ADA: Yes, a good, old-fashioned time with GRANDPA telling us some of his pioneer stories.

VERA: That's what I say. [*Sits.*]

Enter CORA

CORA: Well, I don't know what you're talking about, but I say so too.

MRS. WEST: We'll just all sit down and begin our visit.

VERA [*jumping up*]: Oh, if GRANDPA is going to tell stories he ought to have his dressing gown on and feel comfortable. I'll go get it.

GRANDFATHER: You needn't get it. Those long sleeves an' that long skirt make me nervous.

VERA: But it isn't long, GRAN'DADDY. I cut it off an' fixed it like you said. [*ADA and CORA jump up with a scream.*]

ADA: *You cut it off? W'y, I did, myself.*

CORA: *You cut it off? Well, so did I.*

VERA: But he asked me to do it.

ADA: No, he asked me to cut it off.

CORA: W'y, no, he certainly asked me to and I did.

GRANDFATHER: It must look fine now if you all had a hand at it.

VERA: I'll get it. [*She runs out.*]

MRS. WEST [*laughing*]: This is an interesting tale.

GRANDFATHER [*grimly*]: There won't be any tail left; they've cut it all off.

Enter VERA with dressing gown

THE dressing gown should be made of bright material with sleeves that come above GRANDFATHER'S elbows and the skirt above his knees.

ADA: Let's try it on. [*She and CORA take off GRANDFATHER'S coat.*]

VERA: I hope it isn't ruined. [*She holds the gown for him to slip on.*]

GRANDFATHER [*angrily*]: There, now! A nice looking thing you've made of this. [*MRS. WEST and girls shout with laughter.*] You've spoiled it entirely. Look at these sleeves! Look at the bottom of it—way up above my knees. [*MRS. WEST and girls continue to laugh.*] Laugh if you want to! I can't see anything funny 'bout spoilin' a good new dressing gown.

ADA: It is about right for me for a blouse.

GRANDFATHER [*pulling gown off and throwing it on floor*]: I must say you're bright girls.

CORA: Well, anyway we showed you that we wanted to do something for you.

VERA: It wouldn't have been nice for us not to do as you asked us.

GRANDFATHER: Why didn't you see it was getting too short?

CORA: I was so anxious to get it fixed that I cut off some without looking to see how short it was.

GRANDFATHER: Well, I'll wear it tonight, then I'll buy another. [*They help him put it back on and all laugh again.*]

ADA: We'll buy you another one for a Christmas present, GRAN'DADDY.

CORA: Yes, we surely will.

MRS. WEST: Come, let's fix some sandwiches to eat while GRANDFATHER tells stories.

VERA: Oh, yes. [*MRS. WEST and girls exeunt.*]

GRANDFATHER: I guess it's just as well that lawyer didn't fix that paper. [*Scratches head thoughtfully.*] What am I goin' to do now? I can't give 'em each one the gold beads. [*Thinks.*] I guess they'll have to take turns wearin' 'em. [*Looks at dressing gown and laughs.*]

CURTAIN

THE COMING OF CHRISTMAS FOR FIFTEEN OR MORE CHILDREN

COSTUMES

PILGRIM, white dress with black cape and hood (black shawl can be draped for this); PLEASURE, a very fancy, bright-colored gown; WEALTH, as rich a gown as possible, with jewelry and ornaments in the hair; UNSELFISHNESS, dark gown trimmed with light blue; KIND THOUGHTS, white trimmed with pink; GIVING, white trimmed with yellow; SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS, white with elaborate trimming of tinsel and a small tinsel-trimmed crown; PROPHET, wears dark robe and turban.

STAGE ARRANGEMENT

LEAVE room at the back of stage for the tableau. In front of this space hang curtains, festooned with evergreen, which can be drawn to show tableau. In front of these curtains the various speakers give their lines.

Enter PROPHET who speaks:

Christmas comes over the eastern hills
With a radiance born from above;
But its spirit you'll not discover
Until you have learned, friends, to love.
For ye who would know well its pleasures,
And in its truest joys have a part,
Must know that the SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS
Dwells in a kind, loving heart.
Only a kind, loving heart! [*Exit.*]

OPENING CHORUS

To be sung by voices off the stage as soft bells are rung.

Tune: HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark, the whisper of the breeze!
Hark, the murmur of the trees!
Over hill and 'cross the plain
Floats the holiday refrain;
Merry voices swell the song,
Sing it forth with chorus strong,
Send it o'er the land to say,
"Welcome, Merry Christmas Day.
Welcome Christmas," voices sing,
"Welcome Christmas," glad bells ring.

DURING the singing of the second stanza, a number of children, carrying boughs of evergreen, enter, half from left and half from right, pass across back of stage to opposite side, then half form a circle and hold boughs raised, while others march around them waving boughs.

Let the holly wreaths be seen,
Hang up fragrant boughs of green.
Peace on earth, good will to men,
Christmas time has come again.
Smile as Christmas joys appear,
Smile and scatter rays of cheer,
Banish sadness, let joy reign,
Join the Christmas-tide refrain:
"Welcome Christmas," voices sing,
"Welcome Christmas," glad bells ring.

[Marchers exeunt.]

Enter PILGRIM

PILGRIM: The voices sing of a merry Christmas and would that I might find it. My mind is troubled, my heart is sad, and I long for the peace and joy that Christmas should bring us. Bells chime forth their merry tones; happy voices sing glad Christmas carols, but these do not banish my sadness. To whom can I go for guidance? Where can I find the joys of a merry Christmas? *[Walks sadly across stage.]*

Enter PLEASURE

PLEASURE: Stay, PILGRIM. Canst thou not tell me the way to find a merry Christmas?

PILGRIM: Nay, for I also seek that same guidance. Who art thou?

PLEASURE: I am PLEASURE. I enjoy days of revels and a life of gaiety. I deck myself with fine raiment and follow many forms of amusement. I have many friends who entertain me. I live for a good time, but alas! the Christmas time, which should be so joyous, fails to fill my heart with cheer.

PILGRIM: Perhaps together we may find the joy we seek.
[They start off stage as WEALTH enters at opposite side.]

Enter WEALTH

WEALTH [*calling*]: Whither away, travelers? Stay, that I may ask thee a question. [PILGRIM and PLEASURE *turn back.*]

PLEASURE: What wouldst thou ask?

WEALTH: Fain would I find a merry Christmas. I am WEALTH. I live a life of ease and luxury. I fill my home with the rarest beauties; I surround myself with every comfort that money can obtain. I daily provide new luxuries, but with it all I do not know how to find a happy Christmas. Canst thou not direct me, kind friends?

PLEASURE [*sadly*]: Nay, I, too, am seeking it.

PILGRIM: Let us travel on together. Perhaps we may find one who shall wisely direct us in our search. [*The three turn and start across stage, meeting UNSELFISHNESS who enters.*]

Enter UNSELFISHNESS

WEALTH: Stay, traveler, and tell us what we so anxiously inquire.

UNSELFISHNESS: Gladly will I help thee if in my power. Speak, and tell thy troubles.

WEALTH: You see before you [*points to PLEASURE*] PLEASURE, who spends her hours in gaiety and fills her days with festivities, yet can not find a merry Christmas; and [*points to herself*] WEALTH, who lavishes upon herself all that money can provide, yet fails to find the secret of Christmas joy. Canst thou not help us? Who art thou?

UNSELFISHNESS: I am UNSELFISHNESS and right well can I show you the way to find the joy of Christmas. It is only by following my teachings that this knowledge may become yours. You must cease to think of yourselves; only in thinking of OTHERS shall you become happy. Ah, two of my workers approach; they shall farther direct you.

Enter KIND THOUGHTS *and* GIVING

PLEASURE: I am interested in what thou hast said. Tell us more, we pray thee.

UNSELFISHNESS: Workers, kindly direct these seekers who would find the way to a merry Christmas.

KIND THOUGHTS: I am KIND THOUGHTS. Employ me if you wish your Christmas to be a happy one. All about you are those who need a bit of cheer, who are longing for sympathy, who need kind words to encourage them. The world is full of sadness and troubles; it is full of people who need your loving assistance. When you begin to have KIND THOUGHTS for these unfortunates and to shower them with your sympathy, then will you find the way to a merry Christmas for yourself.

GIVING: I am GIVING. True it is, as it was written of old, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." You, WEALTH and PLEASURE, have been occupied in getting for yourselves all the attractive things of life; you have sought only your own happiness. Now you must begin to give to others. You must give of yourselves, your smiles, your kind words, your love and your time—as well as your gifts. Forget yourselves and give to others; work for those about you, and again I say unto you, GIVE!

PLEASURE: What strange counsel is this!

WEALTH: It is, indeed, a strange and new teaching.

PILGRIM: Yet, I believe it is truth and wisdom.

UNSELFISHNESS [*to* PILGRIM]: Thou speakest rightly. Only by following the teachings which lead to unselfishness, canst thou discover the secret of a happy Christmas. Write this counsel upon your hearts, LOVE and GIVE. [*Exeunt* UNSELFISHNESS, KIND THOUGHTS *and* GIVING.]

ENTER several children trimmed with red crepe paper, bearing boughs of green. They stand at back of stage and sing:

Tune: "IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR"

(Golden Book of Favorite Songs, Page 80)

It comes upon the breeze today,
 The won'drous teaching old,
 The words that centuries ago
 The loving Master told;
 "Give unto others, for 'tis thus
 Thou shalt most truly live;
 For those who would find happiness
 Must unto others give."

At the close of the song they form in lines, facing, raising boughs to form an arch under which the SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS comes down to center.

Enter SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS [*to* PILGRIM, WEALTH *and* PLEASURE]:

Dear friends, it is easy to find the true spirit of Christmas, and happy are they who possess it. If thou wilt follow its guiding, Christmas shall indeed be for you a merry day. As thy heart is, so shall thy Christmas be. If your heart is filled with selfishness you can not find the true joy of Christmas; if your heart is filled with a love for those about you, you shall have the peace and good will which make Christmas a blessed day. Let me give you a Christmas vision.

THOSE who sang and formed the arch for SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS now draw aside the curtains at the back and reveal the tableau, on which soft light should be thrown.

TABLEAU

Two ragged stockings hang upon the wall. A poorly dressed boy and little girl stand by them, gazing sadly then begin to cry silently. At one side a poorly dressed man sits with head bowed on hands; at the other side a mother leans against the wall, wiping her eyes with one hand as she points to the *empty* stockings.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS speaks:

A loving heart and a kindly hand could change this grief into glee; "inasmuch as ye do for the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

CURTAIN

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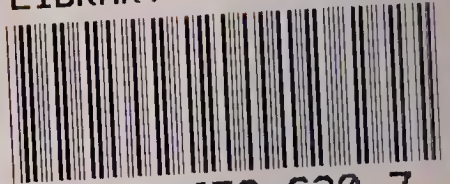
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